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ROME,

IN THE

NINETEENTH CENTURY;

CONTAINING

A COMPLETE ACCOUNT

OF THE

RUINS OF THE ANCIENT CITY, THE REMAINS OF THE MIDDLE AGES, AND THE MONUMENTS OF MODERN TIMES.

WITH REMARKS

ON THE FINE ARTS, ON THE STATE OF SOCIETY, AND ON THE RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES, MANNERS, AND CUSTOMS, OF THE MODERN ROMANS.

IN A

SERIES OF LETTERS

WRITTEN DURING A RESIDENCE AT ROME,

IN THE YEARS 1817 AND 1818.

"'Tis Rome demands our tears,
The Mistress of the World, the seat of empire,
The nurse of heroes, the delight of gods,—
That humbled the proud tyrants of the earth,
And set the nations free,—Rome is no more!"

FIRST AMERICAN, FROM THE FOURTH EDINBURGH EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

NEW-YORK:

PRINTED BY J. & J. HARPER,

FOR E. DUYCKINCK, COLLINS AND HANNAY, COLLINS AND CO., O. A. ROORBACH, E. BLISS AND E. WHITE, G. AND C. CARVILL, A. T. GOODRICH, AND WILLIAM B. GILLEY.

1827.

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EN

PREFACE.

Some apology, or rather some explanation, seems now to be necessary, in offering to the public any book of travels whatsoever.

Every part of the known world has of late been so assiduously explored, and so industriously described, that every man ought to be nearly as well acquainted with the remotest regions of the earth as with the boundaries of his native parish; and many persons are actually better informed about any other country than their own. But in describing Rome, which has been already described so often, such an explanation seems to be more imperatively called for; yet, paradoxical as it may appear, it is the want of a good account of Rome that has induced the Author of these Letters to attempt, in some degree, to supply the deficiency, by their publication. For, among all the manifold descriptions that have appeared, I do not hesitate to say, there is not one that is entitled even to the praise of accuracy. There is not one that contains any account of its antiquities, that can satisfy the antiquary—any description of its monuments of art, that can interest the man of taste—or any general information respecting its multiplied objects of curiosity and admiration, that can gratify the common inquirer. Every enlightened stranger at Rome feels the utter inefficiency of all the published accounts. He gazes on the splendid works of antiquity which surround him, lost in doubt as to their name, their date, and their destination,—bewildered with vague and contradictory statements,—wearied with exchanging one erroneous opinion for another—and unable, amidst the cloud of conjecture, even to ascertain the little that is known with certainty. The common Itineraries, as Forsyth happily observed, "are mere valets de place in print," and, withal, so given

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to lying, that, like the shepherd's boy in the fable, if they do chance to speak truth, they are scarcely believed. There you will find dulness without intelligence—conjecture in place of fact—surmise advanced as certainty—truth perverted—the lights of history neglected, and all things, great and little, of the first importance, and the last insignificance, confounded together in equality of notice. You will find more details about the different parts of one tawdry church, than the noblest monuments of antiquity; you will be directed to a thousand trifling objects not worth notice, while many of the highest interest are so passed over, as scarcely to excite attention. The intelligence they give you, when authentic, is seldom interesting, and when interesting, is rarely authentic. Our English writers, so far as concerns Rome, I must put wholly out of the question. None of them have made it their sole, or even their principal theme; and, generally speaking, the meagre accounts of it given in English books of travels, seem as if copied from other works, rather than written from actual observation; and are little more than a transmission of the errors of their predecessors.* Of the two most popular writers, Eustace is inaccurate, and Forsyth inadequate. The former, indeed, might serve as a guide to the churches, if his total ignorance of the arts did not disqualify him even for that; but in other respects he will only serve to mislead: and Forsyth's desultory remarks, though so admirably distinguished by their acumen and originality, give us none of the information we seek, and only lead us to regret, that one so peculiarly qualified for the task, should have left it unaccomplished. It is true, that in the absence of other guides, the professed Ciceroni† of Rome are very useful to strangers on their first arrival, particularly in exhibiting and explaining the most interesting of its attractions, its remains of antiquity. But,

* By far the best of the very few recent tours I have read, among the many that have been published, is "Sketches of Italy," a work invaluable as a guide to Italy, and written with great spirit and talent.

† Signore Nibby and Signore Rè deservedly enjoy the highest reputation among these gentlemen.

although many of them are men of reading and information, the love of truth is unfortunately too often sacrificed to the love of system. Each embraces some favourite theory, and misrepresents facts, and even misquotes authorities to establish his hypothesis. I do not blame any of these gentlemen because they do not know what cannot be discovered, but because they are not honest enough to avow their ignorance. But we quarrel with them as a lame man does with his crutches: we get on badly with them, but we should do still worse without them; and at first, at least, their assistance will be found of considerable service. Still they cannot altogether supersede the use of books, more especially as people cannot always carry them about in their pockets.

A picture of Rome is, therefore, still a desideratum, but it is one more desirable than easy to supply. The rare and dubious lights that may be thrown upon its antiquities, are scattered through the literature of ages, and must be collected, not only from the works of all the Roman historians and classics, but from the heavy tomes of the Gothic chroniclers; and what are even more dull, and far more voluminous, the wirespun dissertations of the Italian antiquaries. Among the numerous and ponderous volumes that have been compiled on the antiquities of Rome, Nardini's* is the only one in the least worth studying, and as a book of reference, it may prove highly useful; but such is its bulk and verbosity, that few will read it at Rome, and fewer still, I will venture to say, after they have left it. Few, indeed, will there find leisure for such uninviting research; few, when the proud remains of antiquity, and the unrivalled works of art, call upon the eye and the mind in every direction, will turn from them to pore over musty volumes.

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* Roma Antica. Forsyth, who recommends Venuti, I think, can never have read him; otherwise, his sound judgment could never have panegyrized a work so dull, and so deplorably devoid of intelligence, that from its perusal nothing whatever can be gained; for instead of clearing up what was obscure, the author contrives to render what was before clear totally dark; so that the few scattered lights we had possessed are lost in the mist he raises, and we actually end even in greater doubt than we began.

With me the case was different. Possessed of an unconquerable passion for the study, nothing was a labour that could tend to elucidate it; my previous pursuits had turned my attention to these subjects; I had leisure, opportunities, and, I will add, industry, that few of my countrymen possessed; and during two years, I availed myself to the utmost of every means of intelligence, of access to rare books, of the opinions of the best informed, and, above all, of the diligent study of history, pursued solely with this view.

Sincerely conscious as I am, therefore, of my incompetency to such a task, I would still hope, that diligence and ardour may have compensated in some degree for deficiency of powers. My labours were, indeed, pursued solely with a view to the gratification of my own curiosity; and these Letters, which served me as a sort of depository, or register of all I saw and learnt, and were addressed to a friend who was then meditating a tour through Italy, were not originally intended for publication; but the consciousness how valuable, on my first arrival at Rome, would have been the information they contained to myself, the experience of its utility to many of my friends, and the want of any better guide, at last led me to entertain the idea of offering it to the public, though I should never have ventured to have put it into execution, had not my purpose been confirmed by the encouragement of those whose judgment cannot admit of doubt, and whose sincerity I never had cause to distrust.

Reassured by such approbation, I have ventured to indulge the hope that this work may serve as a guide to those who visit Rome, may recall its remembrance to those who have seen it, and convey to those who have not, some faint picture of that wonderful city, which boasts at once the noblest remains of antiquity, and the most faultless masterpieces of art,—which, even at the latest period of its decay, possesses more claims to interest than all others in the proudest season of their prosperity,—which in every age has stood foremost in the world,—which has been the light of the earth in ages past—the guiding star through the long night of

ignorance—the fountain of civilization to the whole western world,—and which every nation reverences as a common nurse, preceptor, and parent.

It is not with feelings such as we view other objects of curiosity, that we look upon Rome. We visit it with something of the same veneration with which we should approach the sepulchre of a parent. All that distinguished it once is laid in dust, but the very soil on which we tread is sacred ground; and while we linger among the proud monuments of its early glory, we feel that we ourselves, and all that surround us, are intruders on a scene, consecrated by the presence of patriots and heroes, and by every hallowed recollection of ancient greatness and virtue. Unlike all else in life, in which retrospection has small part, and our view is directed to what is passing or is to come,—at Rome, it is not the present or the future that occupies us, but the past. We seem to live with those who have gone before us, and our hearts still fondly cherish the delusion that would people these ruins with the shades of "the master spirits" by whom they were once inhabited, and whose very names, even from childhood, have been associated with all that can ennoble and dignify our nature, with the most exalted wisdom, and the most heroic virtue.

It was well observed by Johnson, that "to abstract the mind from all local emotion, would be impossible, if it were endeavoured, and would be foolish, if it were possible. Whatever withdraws us from the power of our senses,—whatever makes the past, the distant, or the future, predominate over the present, advances us in the dignity of thinking beings. Far from me, and from my friends, be such frigid philosophy, as may conduct us unmoved over any ground which has been dignified by wisdom, bravery, or virtue. That man is little to be envied, whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plain of Marathon, or whose *enthusiasm* would not grow warmer among the ruins of *Rome*."*

For the frequency of the observations contained in

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* Dr. Johnson's Tour to the Hebrides.

these Letters, on the inexhaustible treasures of sculpture and painting which fill the museums of Rome, I have no apology to offer, unless, indeed, *they* themselves will plead my excuse. It is not easy to see unmoved, or pass unnoticed, the most faultless models of art,—the proudest triumphs of genius,—and though, aware that description can convey no adequate image of beauty or perfection, I have endeavoured to restrain myself from expatiating on them as much as possible; yet, the tongue will speak of that on which the fancy loves to dwell. From childhood, the pleasures afforded by literature and the arts have been my solace and delight; and I can truly say, that they are the only "roses without thorns" that have strewed my path of life.

Upon Italian literature, however, I have said little. The subject has of late been canvassed, until it is completely exhausted. All the bright productions of its earlier days are celebrated through the world, and there is little new that deserves very high applause. Its former excellence cannot meet with too much praise, but its present state seems to me to be prodigiously over-rated.

The observations on the morals and manners of the Italians, may seem to many, especially to those who do not know them, to be unjustifiably severe. I can only say, that when I left England, my prejudices, if I had any, were in favour of foreign society,—that my judgment was formed upon a constant intercourse with all ranks, from the highest to the lowest,—that if it be unfavourable, it was passed with reluctance, and that I should be truly glad to be convinced that it was erroneous. But, I found in the Italian circles, all the emptiness, the frivolity, the heartlessness, and the licentiousness of the French, without any of their polish and brilliancy; and with all, and more than all, our lifelessness and *ennui*. Like the French, the Italians live in perpetual *representation;* like them, they sacrifice *l'être au paroître;* but, unlike them, their efforts are unsuccessful. Both may study more to *seem* amiable and estimable; but, whatever be the object of an Englishman's ambition, he labours to *become*. Their manners may sometimes shine more in the glitter of a drawing-room,

but their charm will not be found like ours in the domestic circle. They put them on like their coats to go abroad in, but at home their habits are as slovenly as the dresses they sit in. An Englishman, by his own fire-side, neither lays aside his manners nor his dress. Nor is it only in domestic life that our superiority consists: at the hazard of being accused of national partiality, I will maintain, that not only is the society abroad generally inferior to our own, but that in Italy there is nothing worthy of the name of society at all.

Every one who has known the Continent during the last half-century, allows, that society has every where changed for the worse; but while it has been deteriorating abroad it has been improving at home. It has acquired ease and elegance, without losing propriety and decorum. London far outshines every other metropolis in the intellect, the splendour, the brilliance and the elegance of its society; and while, on the Continent, there is no society whatever out of capital cities, and the country is a desert, in England every country neighbourhood abounds with cultivated residents, with social intercourse, and with all the elegancies of polished life. But in nothing is the superiority of English society more apparent, than in the numbers of which it is composed. In other countries there is but one circle, in England there are many. Thousands are shut out of the narrow pale of fashion, whose manners would not disgrace the first court of Europe. I have heard this remarked with astonishment by foreigners. "I find it utterly impossible," said a lady of illustrious rank, "to discover whether English ladies are women of family or fashion or not. I met with a woman of most elegant appearance and manners the other day, with whose conversation I was delighted,—on inquiry, I found, to my amazement, she was the wife of an apothecary."

The more we mix in the society of other countries, the more, certainly, we shall return with redoubled zest to the intelligence, the refinement, the sincerity, and the nice sense of propriety, which distinguish our own. It is true, that it is sometimes deficient in gayety, in vivacity, in the sparkle of lively nothings, in the *laisser aller*

of conversation, in that *esprit de société* in which the French excel every other nation ; but if we must choose between froth and substance, and if we cannot unite both—who would not prefer the latter ?

EXTRACT FROM THE PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

In the First Edition of this work, the Author adverted to the then rising insurrection of Naples, with prognostics as to its ultimate success, which the event has unhappily too well confirmed. In fact, if the boon of freedom were offered, Italy could not now receive it. The soil is not prepared for it, and the tree of liberty, if planted, could not flourish there. Like a restive steed, maddened by cruelty and outrage, Italy may for a moment throw its master, but it will only be to receive another, or the same. The weakness of the States of Italy consists in their division. Like the bundle of rods in the fable, if united, they could not be bent, but singly, they are broken without resistance.—Yet not even their common detestation of their common yoke can induce them to act together in concert to throw it off. Much as they detest their masters, they detest each other more. If, however, we are ever to look for freedom at all, I am still of opinion that it is in the north, not the south of Italy, it will arise. But there is as yet no promise of its dawn. The political horizon is dark and lowering. Lombardy is prostrate. Naples has fallen. Rome cannot long stand. The Austrian will soon virtually rule over it. Italy, from the Alps to the Ocean, will once more be overrun by the Goths, and sink under a tyranny the most galling and the most despicable that has ever disgraced modern times. That doom, indeed, may yet be averted. The present weak and senseless system of despotism may pass away. But whether it is to be the work of the people themselves, or of foreign ambition—whether it is to be succeeded by their own freedom, or by another

slavery—is a doubtful question. Certainly, if we judge of the future from the past, we shall not look, with any very sanguine hopes, to the political regeneration of Italy. Doomed,

> *Per servire sempre, o vincitrice o vinta,*
> (Conquering or conquered, still alike a slave,)

all the riches and blessings with which the prodigality of Heaven has dressed her happy shores have only served more effectually to rivet her chains. The highest gifted among the countries of the earth, she stands the lowest in the scale of nations. The strongest in physical power, she is trampled under foot by the weakest. But let us turn from the prospect of that political and moral degradation, invariably found together, to the brightening hope that the march of knowledge, and the advancing lights of society, may at length give the enslaved nations that moral energy and might of mind, which are alone necessary to assert their freedom,—that the blessings of a wise and equitable government may at length be disseminated throughout the world; and that those rays of light which are breaking at once in so many remote parts of the earth, may at length shine out more and more unto the perfect day!

FOURTH EDITION.

When the Author, after much hesitation, originally resolved upon the publication of these Letters, she certainly little contemplated the possibility of their ever reaching a Second—much less a Fourth Edition; but this unexpected success has only increased her solicitude to merit it; and she has spared no pains, by careful revision and correction, to free the work from every typographical error; as well as, by considerable additions and alterations, to render every successive Edition—but more especially this—the Fourth,—more deserving of the distinction with which it has been honoured.

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ROME.

LETTER I.

FLORENCE, December 5, 1816.

"We are here to-day," as my uncle Toby says, "but gone to-morrow;" at least I hope so—for Rome, the object of all our thoughts and desires, which we have so long ardently wished, and so little, till lately, expected ever to see—Rome is at length before us, and the nearer we approach to it, the more impatient we become to reach it; so that, in spite of all the attractions of Florence, and all the entreaties of our friends, though we only arrived last night, we set off to-morrow morning.

We had resolved to see nothing here till our return: but it is easier to form such resolutions than to keep them; and we found it impossible to resist giving a passing glance to a few of the many far-famed objects of interest this seat of art contains. Immediately after breakfast, therefore, we set off to pay a visit to the Venus di Medicis, whose morning levee we found already crowded with a circle of the ardent admirers who daily pour forth their rapturous adoration at her feet. With feelings of high-wrought expectation we entered the presence-chamber; a crimson, octagonal hall of the gallery called the tribune, where, bright in eternal youth and matchless beauty, "stands the statue that enchants the world."

But my expectations had been so highly raised, and, I suppose, so far exceeded possibility, that my first sensation, I confess it with shame, was disappointment;—nay, I am by no means sure that it was not in some degree my last; for although new beauties continually

rose upon me as I contemplated her form of perfect symmetry and more than feminine grace, the soul was wanting; the expression, the sentiment I sought for, was not there; she did not come up to the soul-seducing image in my mind. It was not a goddess, nor a celestial being that I saw before me—it was a woman, a lovely and graceful woman certainly;—but still I think that I have actually seen women, real living women, almost as beautiful, and far more interesting; and, indeed, to confess the truth,—I thought her legs were rather thick, and her face very insipid. But remember, that in giving you my undissembled opinion, I make an honest avowal, not a presumptuous criticism; I know that the censure I would pass on her recoils on myself—that it does not prove her want of beauty, but my want of taste; and, convinced of this mortifying truth, I quitted her presence at last, with no small vexation to find that I could not feel, as I ought, the full force of that unapproached perfection, which has rendered this renowned statue the idol of successive generations, the triumph of art, and the standard of taste.

I suppose, after confessing myself disappointed in this, it signifies not what I can say of any thing else; but I cannot pass wholly unnoticed the beautiful Grecian statues, the pride of Florence, that, inferior only to its boasted Venus, are ranged around her, like satellites around a planet. I say *inferior*, for, beautiful as they are, they are not to be compared with her. The dullest perception, and the most perverted taste, must be struck with her superiority. Far as she fell below my perhaps extravagant expectations, as far she surpasses every statue that I have ever seen, or perhaps ever may see. But I expected the distance that divided her from the rest to be more immeasurable—and I found, or fancied defects, when I looked for nothing but perfection.

But let us turn from the Venus to the Whetter, or *Rémouleur*, or *Arrotino*, or by whatever name, English, French, or Italian, the famous statue of a kneeling slave, whetting his knife, is to be called. This admirable figure is represented in the act of suspending his

employment, and looking up as if to listen to something that is said to him. It is generally supposed that he represents a slave overhearing the conspiracy of Catiline: but I cannot remember that any slave did overhear that conspiracy, neither do I see how any body can be so very sure that he is overhearing any conspiracy at all. To me, his countenance expresses none of that astonishment, horror, and eager curiosity, that the surreptitious listener to such a dark and momentous plot would naturally feel. —If he must needs be overhearing a conspiracy, the supposition that it was that formed by the sons of Brutus, which really was discovered in this manner, is surely more probable. Livy, (you will please to observe, I am fresh from reading him) Livy tells us that a slave, who had previously suspected, and even learnt something of their plans, overheard the conspirators at supper, talking over their treasonable designs, and obtained the means of convicting them, by finding out where and when their letters might be seized.* Now the expression of this statue seems to me to accord perfectly with this situation. The full confirmation of his suspicions; the conviction that he had the traitors in his power; the certainty that he could give the information that would ruin them, and make his own fortune—all this I fancied I could see in it;—but I dare say it is nothing else but fancy. The attitude of the man sharpening his knife upon a whetstone, made me once think that it might be intended for Accius Navius, that famous soothsayer, who declared "he could do what the king was thinking of;" and when Tarquin tauntingly said, "I was thinking whether you could cut that whetstone through with a razor," immediately severed it in two. The statue of this miraculous soothsayer was placed in the Forum;† but I don't think I can prove either that this figure is a soothsayer, or that he is cutting stones with a razor; so that I shall not insist upon your believing it. Indeed, it is evidently a work of a far higher era of art than any which could have commemorated the events of Roman story. Nor did the great

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* Livy, lib. ii. c. 4.

† Ib. lib. i. c. 36.

artists of Greece,—by one of whom this masterpiece of sculpture must have been executed—ever, in any one instance, take their subjects from history,—not even from the glorious history of their own country. It is to Mythology, to Poetry, and to Fable, that all ancient sculpture must be referred. By far the best conjecture I have ever heard respecting this statue is, that it represents the Scythian whom Apollo commanded to flay Marsyas.*

Be it what it may, however, it is a work of no common genius, and may perhaps be considered as faultless in its kind. The unknown artist, indeed, has not aspired to the lofty height of ideal beauty; he has not sought to realize the forms that visit the fancy of inspired genius, or to reveal to mortal sight the shape inhabited by a deity. But in that which he has attempted his success is complete. It is common nature and life,—true, forcible, and energetic, that arrest our attention; and so correctly just, so highly finished is the execution, that we may imagine it one of those statues which, in early Greece, we know it was the labour of a life to perfect. This statue was restored by Michael Angelo with a skill scarcely inferior to the original. The parts wanting were so admirably replaced by his chisel, that it may be said to have lost nothing.

In the famous group of the Wrestlers, the flexibility of the entwined limbs, the force of the muscles, and the life and action of the figures, are wonderful; but the heads are totally destitute of meaning, and don't look as if they belonged to the bodies;† their fixed immoveable countenances have no marks even of that corporeal exertion, much less of that eager animation and passion, which men struggling with each other in the heat of contest,

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* The statue of Marsyas suspended to the trunk of a tree, is also in the Florentine gallery. Another, and a finer representation of the same horrible subject, is at the Villa Albani, at Rome.

† The statues were really headless when first discovered, but the ancient heads were afterward found. Some critics believe that this group represents two of the sons of Niobe, not only from the circumstance of their having been found nearly in the same spot as the statues of Niobe and her children, but from the consideration that, according to Ovid, two of the sons of Niobe were exercising themselves in wrestling, when pierced by the arrows of Apollo.—*Metamorph.* lib. vi. 3. l. 114.

and at the moment in which the victor triumphs over the vanquished, would naturally feel.

The dancing Faun, playing on the cymbals, is all life and animation, and his jocund face expresses so much delight in his own performance, that it is impossible not to sympathize in his mirth, and scarcely possible to refrain from beginning to caper about with him. Somebody observed, that he looked too old to be dancing with so much glee; and perhaps the criticism might be just if he were a man: but, as a faun, I imagine his nature is to be for ever joyous.

These three pieces of sculpture, the Whetter, the Wrestlers, and the Dancing Faun, are unique, and are therefore valuable as well for their rarity as their beauty.

A little Apollo is very much admired; and perhaps his greatest fault is his diminutive size, which, in spite of his symmetry and uncommon grace, renders him but a contemptible representative of the god of light and majesty. He is in the attitude of the Lycian Apollo—one arm thrown over his head. Beside the Venus, he looks mean and effeminate. He suffers more from her neighbourhood than the other statues, because more in the same style of beauty. No female form has been suffered to approach her—none could stand the comparison.

We saw the Goddess of Beauty in painting as well as sculpture. On the wall of the room behind the statue, my eye was caught by two celebrated Venuses of Titian; one of which, however, is incomparably superior to the other. It is, indeed, an exquisite painting. She is represented voluptuously reclining on a couch, with flowers in her hand, while two hideous old women, who are opening a chest in the back-ground, seem to be introduced for no other purpose, than to heighten, by contrast, the charms of the youthful beauty.

Thus, the finest Venuses that painting and sculpture ever produced, meet the eye at the same moment.

I suppose I have no soul for Venuses, for my attention soon wandered from them to Raphael's St. John the Baptist; one of the finest productions of that inimitable master. St. John is alone in the wilderness, left, amid solitude and silence, to nature and to God. His only

clothing is a leopard's skin half thrown round his graceful limbs; and his youth, not yet matured to manhood, derives deeper interest from his deserted situation, and from that glow of devoted enthusiasm which lights up his countenance, and proclaims him equal to do, to dare, to suffer, all that may be required of him by Heaven. The fire of a prophet, and the fervour of a saint, flash in his dark eye, and the spirit of divine inspiration seems to raise him above mortality. This great picture is an example at once of the finest conceptions of elevated genius, and the execution of the most finished art.

In a very different style is the portrait of the Fornarina, a woman so called from being the wife of a baker, but famed as having been the beautiful and beloved mistress of Raphael, who himself painted her, as it would seem, *con amore*, for the portrait is the very perfection of female loveliness, and combines all the breathing life and magic colouring of the Venetian school, with a truth of design and expression its best masters could never boast.* The eye dwells on it with never satiated delight, and the unlearned and the connoisseur equally experience its fascination. What cold critic can discover a fault while he contemplates it? and who, after seeing it, can say, that Raphael was no colourist?

The Tribune is filled with masterpieces of painting by the first Italian artists; but I must not speak of those beauties which one eager transient glance gave to my view. There was one among them, however, the work of Michael Angelo Buonarotti, which I beheld with astonishment; and if it be really his, I can only say, that some of the old women, to whom he left oil painting as a fit employment, might have gone near to rival him in it.

The gallery itself is filled with a double row of ancient statues, and the walls are adorned with a series of pictures, chiefly valuable, as illustrating the history of the art, from its revival by Cimabue in the 13th century to the present times.

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* When this was written I had never been at Venice, and consequently had never seen those unrivalled masterpieces of Titian, which are inferior to nothing that painting ever produced. No one can judge of Titian out of Venice, of Raphael out of Rome, or of Corregio out of Parma.

Twenty rooms or cabinets, of which the tribune is one, run along in a suite behind the gallery, and open into it. They are filled with the choicest treasures of the Museum—with specimens of the different schools of painting, separately arranged—with the portraits of painters, which fill one room—with the most valuable sculptures—with ancient inscriptions, bronzes, gems, Etruscan and Grecian vases of terra cotta and marble, adorned with painting and sculptures; among which are the famous Medici and Borghese vases. The first of these is generally considered the finest in the world, of the most perfect form, the grandest dimensions, and the most exquisite sculpture. It represents the sacrifice of Iphigenia, and I need scarcely say is a work of Grecian art.

One of these rooms is entirely filled with the most costly and ingenious works in precious stones. Here are heads and figures of Roman emperors and Catholic saints; of princely sinners and pious popes of the house of Medici, who have hats of jet, faces of agate, eyes of opal, coats and petticoats of lapis lazuli, legs of jasper, and shoes of porphyry. My eye was dazzled with a profusion of vases of crystal, with candlesticks and crucifixes composed of gems of every varied colour; with diminutive columns and mimic temples; goblets that might serve for the banquets of gods, cups fit for fairies, and jewels worth the eye of an emperor.

But there are two rooms filled with what is still more valuable—the finest collection of ancient and modern vases in the world. Leaving the famous Etruscan Chimera and Orator, and all other ancient monsters and men, to be described by heads of more learning and leisure than mine, let me speak my admiration of the unrivalled Mercury of John of Bologna,—aërial, spirited, designing, full of art and purpose—quick in intellect, invention, and rare device—it is Hermes himself, the winged messenger of the gods, that hovers for a moment before our eyes, "just lighted on a heaven-kissing hill," his plumes still fluttering, and his limbs so ready to spring again into air, that we almost fear he will disappear from our sight. His foot rests on the head of a Zephyr, a beautiful poetic thought. Surely in some favoured moment the

god must have revealed himself to the artist, and touched him with his wand; for mere mortal imagination, unassisted, could never have formed so happy a conception. The fame of John of Bologna, beyond the Alps at least, is, I think, by no means equal to his extraordinary merit. This exquisite statue is far beyond any modern work I have ever seen, and is excelled only by a few masterpieces of ancient art.

We entered the hall of Niobe, in which, to my inexpressible amazement, I beheld her fourteen sons and daughters, all separately dying in various attitudes round the room. The majority of these ladies and gentlemen reminded me of a set of bad actors on the stage, throwing themselves into studied and affected postures, in order to expire with effect. The number of them, all giving up the ghost at once, like the dramatis personæ of Tom Thumb, and ranged at regular distances in a formal circle, is perhaps the grand source of the burlesque. If viewed singly, they would cease to be absurd; and several of them are of first rate excellence.

Niobe herself, however, is true tragedy. She is bending over her youngest child, who clings to her knees; and while in an agony of maternal love, she encircles with her arm the most helpless of her devoted progeny, conscious despairing inability to save is expressed in every lineament of the living marble. The powerful pathos and the deep-seated expression of agonizing grief, which speak in her countenance and gesture, find their way at once to the heart.

This group is in the grand style of sculpture, and possesses all the serene majesty and chaste simplicity of the pure Grecian school. Some trifling faults of detail may perhaps be found. Though the form is on a semi-colossal scale, yet surely the arms are of disproportionate thickness. One of them, however, and several other parts of the statue, have been restored by unknown and bungling artists. The effect of the figure and drapery too, when viewed from behind, is rather ludicrous, so that it makes you cry on one side, and laugh on the other. A statue should preserve its character and excellence in every point of view; but while I am writing, it

occurs to me like a faintly remembered dream, that I have heard the supposition, that Niobe once adorned the tympanum of some Grecian temple of Apollo or Diana. If so, it could never have been viewed from behind, and this accounts for the inattention of the sculptor to its appearance in this position. How different, too, must have been the effect of her children, all combined into one grand group, with her own commanding figure in the centre, forming one overpowering scene of grief and horror, to what they now exhibit detached,—destroying, instead of contributing to the effect of each other, and posted in a stiff formal circle to look ridiculous!*

In quitting the gallery, we passed Venus in a great variety of forms, but it was not always that we could recognise in them her claims to be the Goddess of Beauty; a pretty little crouching Venus alone caught my fancy. We afterwards walked through a long suite of superb, cold state apartments in the Palazzo Pitti, the residence of the Grand Duke, to see the Venus of Canova; so that it was my lot in this one day to see more Venuses than I ever saw before in the whole course of my life. I have no hesitation in saying, that this justly celebrated modern Venus far surpasses all the ancient Venuses in the gallery, excepting the Venus di Medicis, but she greatly falls short of that—I mean in perfection, for she certainly exceeds it in height. She is represented as coming out of the bath, and drawing round her beautiful form a drapery, one end of which she has raised from the ground, and presses to her bosom with the most graceful modesty imaginable.†

I will not tax your patience with any further encomium

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* Judging from the style, more particularly of the hair, Winkelman attributes these sculptures to Scopas. Pythagoras, who followed Scopas, was the first sculptor who perfectly succeeded in the treatment of the hair; and Winkelman thinks the hair in these statues proves them to be antecedent to the improved period.

† The famous Cnidian Venus of Praxiteles, (which was burnt in the palace of Lausiacus, in Constantinople, in A. D. 475,) is described precisely in this attitude by Pliny; her arm crossing her bosom presses to it a loose drapery. There is a statue in the Vatican reported to be an ancient copy of this great masterpiece of art.—Vide WINKELMAN, *Histoire de l' Art*, lib. vi. cap. 2, § 10.

on her beauties, but content myself with observing, that whatever trifling faults the eye of fastidious criticism may detect in this admirable statue, it is an honour to the age that produced it, and sufficient of itself to place its author in the rank of first-rate sculptors.

The Palazzo Pitti contains one of the finest collections of painting that Italy can boast, but we had no leisure to examine them.

From the splendid palace of the Arch-Dukes, we went to their more splendid tomb. We first entered the anti-chapel, or *Capello de' Despositi*, built by Michael Angelo Buonarotti; and notwithstanding that great name, you must permit me to say the truth, that the architecture is below criticism. The unfinished statues which adorn the sepulchres, the work of the same great artist, are grand, daring, and original in their conception, the offspring of a mighty mind. An allegorical figure, called, I think, Evening, of a man sinking to sleep on one of the tombs, and Morning, a female form rising from slumber, together with the admirable statue of a Lorenzo, (not the Magnificent,) seated in a pensive attitude, his head resting on his hand, which is supported on his knee, above the sarcophagus that holds his remains, struck me as the finest.

Unfinished statues are not legitimate subjects of criticism; but I will own that, "with all their imperfections on their heads," these are, in my humble opinion, the best productions I have yet seen of Michael Angelo, and that I have been wofully disappointed in them all. His native city indeed contains few finished works of the great Florentine; and, if I may say so without presumption, none worthy of his fame. In the gallery I saw nothing of his except his earliest attempt, the Mask of a Faun; the fine, but unfinished bust of Brutus; and the Bacchus, which, if it had not been inscribed with his name, I never could have believed to have been his work. It is one of the most hideous and disgusting statues I ever beheld. A form meagre even to extenuation, and awkward to excess, with an expression of face and figure nearly approaching idiotism represents the God of Mirth and Wine, who most certainly would have had few wor-

shippers under such a semblance. If the object of the sculptor was to give a moral lesson, by thus representing the disgusting effects of intemperance, as the Spartans used to exhibit the intoxicated Helots to their children, he has certainly obtained his aim; but if he wanted to produce a fine statue, I cannot but think he has failed.

It is, however, said that Michael Angelo, incensed at the depreciating criticisms of his contemporaries upon his preceding works, and convinced they arose from envy, finished this statue with great secrecy, and having broken off one of its arms, buried it where he knew it must soon be dug up. The connoisseurs of the day, taking it for an antique, immediately pronounced it to be a masterpiece; and even tauntingly asked, when Michael Angelo would execute such a work? It may be imagined with what pride and pleasure the artist produced the broken arm, and proved it to be his own. It is my misfortune to differ from connoisseurs; and if this statue were proved to be the work of Phidias, I could not be brought to admire it.

I begin to be convinced I have no taste. But let any one, not dazzled with the lustre of a name, compare any of the works of Michael Angelo existing in Florence, with the bronze Mercury of John of Bologna, and honestly say to which the preference is due.

From this anti-chapel of tombs, we entered the heavy and gloomy, but most magnificent Mausoleum of the Dukes of the Medici line; whose walls, encrusted with every variety of precious marbles, and more precious gems, form a striking contrast to its dome of bare brick; for this parody of human greatness never was, and I suppose never will be, finished. We passed unheeded the gorgeous monuments that fill its niches; but in the adjacent church of San Lorenzo there was one tomb which arrested our steps, and called forth our veneration. There, beneath a plain flag-stone, trodden by every foot, repose the ashes of Cosmo de' Medici, "the father of his country."

This simple inscription, "Pater Patriæ," conferred on him by the spontaneous gratitude of his fellow-citizens, and more eloquent of praise than volumes of eulogium, is

all that marks his unpretending grave. His patriotic spirit would never have designed a work of such private pride and public inutility, as the magnificent temple which the vanity of his degenerate successors projected for their unhonoured dust. They rest forgotten in marble sarcophagi, while the memory of Cosmo, who laid the foundation, not merely of a dynasty, but of a state; who gave his name not only to his country, but his age, and who is immortalized, not by his conquests, but his virtues; the memory of Cosmo de' Medici is written on a more durable monument than brass or marble—on the hearts of mankind, and in the impartial page of history.

There his example records the useful lesson, that princes, by cherishing the arts of peace, may gain that imperishable glory which far surpasses the fading laurels of military renown; that there are other and surer paths to fame and greatness, than the bloody and uncertain road to conquest; and that the ruler of a small and free state may leave a name behind him, which the despotic master of empires cannot equal. Yes! the kings and conquerors of this world may go down to the dust unnoticed and forgotten, but the name of Cosmo de' Medici will be revered and blessed while honour and virtue are upon the earth.

Lorenzo the Magnificent is buried near his grandfather. To the wise and benignant institutions of Cosmo, Florence, previously oppressed, by the tyranny of her bishops, and distracted by the dissentions of her nobles, owed independence, prosperity, free commerce, and wealth. From those of Lorenzo, she derived the precious gifts of arts and letters, which have crowned her with fame through succeeding generations: but while we venerate the memory of these truly great and enlightened men, how doubly deep do we execrate the names of their unworthy successors, to whose usurpations their very virtues had paved the way, and who, while they placed on their brows a barren ducal crown, trampled under foot the lost liberties of their country!

The adjoining Laurentian Library, founded by Lorenzo the Magnificent, contains a very rare and numerous collection of valuable manuscripts, among which the most

remarkable is the Pandects of Justinian, said to have been found at Amalfi, and which, wherever it came from, is of undoubted authenticity, and proved the fountain of modern civil jurisprudence. It was produced for our inspection with great care, and is in admirable preservation. The manuscript travels of Cosmo, the third duke, through England and Holland, adorned with views, were shown to us, but we had no leisure to examine them. From the cursory glance I gave, they seemed to be less the work of the prince than of his secretary.

We visited with veneration the tomb of Michael Angelo Buonarotti,—for, as Aretino said, "the world has had many monarchs, but only one Michael Angelo." It stands in the church of Santa Croce, the Westminster Abbey of Florence: and opposite to it is the monument of Galileo, whose remains were not consigned to it, nor allowed to profane this holy earth until a hundred years after his death. Boccacio was buried at Certaldo, the place of his birth and death, and not in this church, as some travellers have asserted.

We could not leave Florence without taking one glance at its vaunted Cathedral, of which the proud octagonal dome, the predecessor of St. Peter's, towering far above every other Church, forms so striking a feature in every view of the city. Its *campanile*, or belfry, as usual in the north of Italy, does not form a part of the building, but stands by its side, a lofty isolated tower. Near to it is the pavilion-shaped baptistery; and thus what would be all comprised within one church in England, in Italy forms three distinct but adjacent buildings. They stand in a fine open situation, and are built with, or rather incrusted with, black and white marble, placed in alternate horizontal stripes, so that they look exactly as if dressed up in a black and white striped gown. A fine building should be composed of one substance and one hue, and is never so noble as when it seems one grand homogeneous mass, a hollowed mountain of stone; even the notched squares of brick or mason-work, by which the eye traces the slow labour of aggregation that formed it, invariably impair the grand effect of the whole. In the edifices we are now considering, the diversity of co-

lour and patched-piecemeal effect, are so totally destructive of that unity of appearance, which is an indispensable requisite to architectural grandeur, and give them such an air of indiscribable meanness, that neither their imposing elevation, their rich materials, nor their profusion of ornament, could prevent me from considering them as monuments of a false and meretricious taste.

The front of the Cathedral still remains unfinished. The inside, like the out, is of a spurious Gothic, a sort of jumble of Gothic and Grecian; it is inlaid, carved, and paved with marble: and yet, in spite of all this magnificence, it is dingy, dirty, bare-looking, and neglected. "The paintings," says Eustace in describing it, "are generally *masterpieces of the art.*" What was my astonishment when I found that there was nothing to be seen except a few old portraits, (among which is a likeness of Sir John Hawkwood, that famous old English knight, who played so distinguished a part at the head of the Italian condottieri;) and that the whole Cathedral does not contain any thing, which even a *laquais de place* could pretend to be a tolerable picture; though the whole tribe of these lacqueys do certainly show one such black, dusky, unintelligible daubs, as "*masterpieces of the art,*" that I marvel how there should be a church without one.

This Cathedral is adorned with some dirty statues of old bishops and evangelists, and with an unfinished altar-piece of marble, the last work of Buonarotti, which represents *La Pietà*, as the image of the Virgin mourning over the dead body of Christ, whether in painting or in sculpture, is uniformly called.

It was before the high altar of this Cathedral, during the celebration of mass, in the year 1478, that Giuliano de' Medici was murdered by the hand of Francesco Pazzi, his disappointed rival. His brother, Lorenzo the Magnificent, was severely wounded, and narrowly escaped with life from the hands of the conspirators, all of whom were immediately executed, without even the form of a trial. For, in fact, no proof could be wanting of a crime publicly committed in the face of assembled multitudes, and for which, from the rank and power of the

parties, if punishment had been deferred, it might have been altogether evaded. Undoubtedly the perpetrators of such a desperate deed had trusted for impunity to success and force of arms, not to concealment. This horrible conspiracy, of which a Pope* was the contriver, and an Archbishop† the perpetrator. no doubt owed its strength to political motives, and jealousy of the growing power of the Medici; but the true origin of the murder, if we may credit the historians of the day, was love, not ambition. At a tournament given by Lorenzo the Magnificent, his younger brother Giuliano, and Francesco Pazzi, of a family which bore hereditary enmity to the Medici, both fell desperately in love with the beautiful Camilla Caffarelli. After a long courtship, Giuliano was the favoured lover. He made her his bride; and not long afterward, thus fell a victim to the rage of his vindictive rival, at the very altar of God.

Above that altar, the statue of God himself, the Eternal Father, was pointed out to me sitting behind some candlesticks! Inexpressibly shocked, I asked the lacquey if it was really meant for the Supreme Being. "*Sicuro!*" he replied, no less astonished on his side, at the abhorrence I expressed at the sight of a statue which he had already assured me was "*bella assai!*" and, moreover, the work of Baccio Bandinelli.

It was some time before I recovered from my amazement, and it is not too strong an expression to say, horror. The image of God, fashioned by the hands of man, was to me the excess of profanation, and the sight of it was to my eyes what blasphemy would be to my ears. But the Italians seem to think representations of the Deity in painting and sculpture neither impious nor reprehensible, and not a whit more presumptuous or profane than those of the Madonna and the Redeemer; not considering that *they* lived and walked the earth in human form; but that "eye hath not seen, neither hath ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to

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* Sextus IV. † Salviati, Archbishop of Pisa.

conceive" that Supreme Being who dwelleth in the heavens eternal and alone.

The image of the "Eternal Father," indeed, is less common than any other in Italian churches, only, I apprehend, because He is less the object of worship. The Virgin is beyond all comparison the most adored. Particular saints, in particular places, may indeed divide with her the general homage, but they enjoy at best only a local, and sometimes a transient popularity; a saint that is held in great esteem at one town being perhaps thought nothing of at another, and even when at the height of favour, occasionally falling into disgrace; whereas the worship of the Virgin is universal in all places, and by all people; not only, as I had fancied before I entered Italy, by females, who might think her, on account of her sex, their most appropriate and zealous intercessor, but equally by men, and by priests as well as laymen. After the Virgin, some of the principal saints seem to be the most worshipped, then our Saviour, and lastly, God. Shocking as this may appear, it is too true. I am sure I do not exaggerate when I say, that throughout Italy, Spain, Portugal, and every country where the Catholic is the *exclusive* religion of the people, for one knee bent to God, thousands are bowed before the shrines of the Virgin and the saints. I know I shall be told by the advocates of that religion, that they are addressed only as mediators at the throne of the Most High; that the worship, seemingly paid to these images, is offered to themselves; to their *essence* as saints and spirits alone. Such may very probably be the doctrine of the clergy, when on their guard, and more especially to Protestants; but hear the belief of the people whom they teach; with them, it is in the image that all the virtue and holiness resides; and if this were not the case, if an image of a saint or a Madonna were considered as nothing more than their visible representation, why should one be better than another? Why should distant pilgrimages be performed, and crowds flock to worship some one particular *image*, if it had no particular power or virtue? And why should there be any miracle-working *images* at all?

But more of this hereafter. At present let me get you

out of the Cathedral, first giving you a glance of the faded, time-worn picture of Dante, the sole repenting tribute Florence ever paid to the son whom she expelled, disgraced, and persecuted through life. though after his death, she contended with vain importunity, and even humble supplication, for his remains. But they repose "far from his ungrateful country," and are the glory of Ravenna, which gave him, in exile, an honourable asylum —in death, a tomb.

Tired as we were with sight-seeing, we could not pass the Baptistery without stopping to admire one of its three gates, (for I am sure it could only have been that one,) which drew from Michael Angelo, in his ecstasy of admiration, the memorable exclamation, "that they were worthy to be the gates of Paradise." They are of bronze, and represent, in basso relievo, and in small separate compartments—forming perfect pictures—the history of the Old Testament—beginning with the creation of man. It is impossible not to be charmed with the exquisite grace and beauty of the figures, and the art with which the story is told: they even reminded me in design, sentiment, and expression, of the pictures of Raphael. But I need not add my feeble tribute of praise to a work which has been stamped with the approbation of Buonarotti.

They were executed by Laurentio Ghiberto, a Florentine, who flourished in the ———, I am sorry I cannot remember positively what century, but I believe the fourteenth. The second gate, representing the history of the New Testament, though said to be by the same artist, struck me as so decidedly inferior, that I can scarcely believe it shared the equal commendation of the great sculptor; and as to the third, which is the work of a native of Pisa, whose name I have forgotten, it is not to be compared to either of them.

Having thus run through more things in a day than we could attentively see in a month, we finished our morning's survey of the treasures of Florence, and returned to the hotel by the side of the Arno, in whose clear waters the glow of the setting sun was reflected in the richest hues of heaven. The situation of Florence is singularly

delightful. It stands in one of the most fertile plains, and on the margin of one of the most classic streams in the world, at the base of the lofty chain of Apennines, which, sweeping round to the north, seem to screen it from the storms of winter; while their sides, hung with chesnut woods, and their peaks glittering with snow, rise far above the graceful slope and vine-covered height of Fiesole, whose utmost summit, crowned with a convent half hid in a deep cypress grove, overlooks "Florence the fair."

My impressions of the city itself from this hasty survey, were, that it possesses in no common degree the common advantages and resources that form an attractive residence, and many very uncommon ones besides.—Commodious houses, good shops and markets, cheapness and plenty, extensive and accessible libraries, public amusements, elegant society, arts, literature,—and the Gallery, with the inexhaustible store of delight it contains,—not to mention all the private collections of paintings. Like most of the continental towns, however, the streets seemed to me narrow and gloomy; but they are on the whole more cheerful, and certainly far cleaner than ordinary. They are paved with flat irregular-shaped flag-stones, delightful for driving upon; but they have the usual inconvenient want of a trottoir or footway, and consequently the same feeling of insecurity attends one's progress through them on foot.

By far the most enviable place of residence I saw was the Lung' Arno, where a succession of palaces border either side of the river, and are connected by four bridges, among which the three graceful elliptical marble arches of the Ponte de la Santissima Trinita, and the picturesque covered passage of the Ponte Vecchio, or Ponte de' Orefici,—as it is sometimes called, from being crowded with old-fashioned, odd-looking, little jewellers' shops,—most powerfully attract one's attention.

Florence, which only rose to importance in modern times, boasts no remains of former days. Not a single fallen column, or mouldering temple, arrests our steps; but, though destitute of antiquities, it abounds in the treasures of the fine arts. The Piazza del Granduca,—be-

sides the equestrian statue in bronze of Cosmo, the first duke, by John of Bologna, from which it derives its name, —is ornamented with the Rape of the Sabines, a fine group in marble by the same artist; Judith in the act of murdering Holofernes, by Donatello; David triumphant over Goliah, by Michael Angelo; Hercules killing Cacus, by Bandinello; and a bronze statue of Perseus with the head of Medusa, by Benvenuto Cellini, the "mad goldsmith," of notorious memory.

The sight of bronze and marble statues, the masterpieces of modern sculpture, adorning the streets and public fountains, exposed to the weather, and courting the public eye, made us feel that Florence was indeed "the Athens of Italy," the cradle of the fine arts, and the place of their regeneration, as Athens was of their birth. It was here that the sister arts of Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture, like the Graces, started at once into life, and, entwined in each other's arms, grew from infancy to maturity. It was here, after the slumber of ages, that divine Poetry first reappeared upon earth,—touched the soul of Dante with that inspiration which created a language harmonized by Heaven, and revealed to him in sublime visions of hell the horrors of the world to come, and to our own Milton in glimpses of Paradise the beauty of that which was lost. It was here that infant Science, beneath the fostering care of Galileo, disclosed her light to man; and here Taste, Genius, Literature, and the Arts, which have humanized the world, flourished beneath the reign of Freedom; but with Freedom they fled for ever. This is no vain figure of speech or dream of fancy. The history of all the Italian states, and perhaps of almost every other country, gives proof of this truth. If we look back to ancient times, in Athens it was in the most glorious era of her republic,—in Etruria, it was while her states existed free and independent, and were governed by their own chosen delegates,—and in Rome, it was during the Augustan age, while yet she had known no tyrant, and the last lingering sparks of Roman freedom were unexpired—that literature and the fine arts reached their proudest pre-eminence. In modern times, it was in the republics of Florence, Pisa, Siena, Bologna, Venice, and

Genoa, that they sprung forth the companions of Freedom; and it is far more than poetically true, that they have ever followed in her train. With her they appeared upon the ungenial soil of Flanders and Holland; and with her "they sought" her last, and at present, her sole abode—England. It is true, indeed, that the want of patronage, the disadvantages of climate, of isolated situation, and seclusion from the great models of art, together with other physical causes, have operated to check our country in attaining full perfection in some of the arts which are peculiarly dependent upon climate, and its concomitants; though, in despite of every obstacle, I believe every competent judge will allow, that the architects and painters of England, in the reign of George the Third, and even more in that of George the Fourth, have far surpassed their contemporaries in every other country; and that her sculptors are only excelled by the Canova and Thorwaldsen of Rome.*

But in all the great and useful arts that minister to the improvement of society and the power of man, in every branch of science and literature, in poetry and eloquence, in the noblest of the fine arts themselves, and in all that is the best proof of their influence, is not England at this moment confessedly unrivalled? And without freedom, would she ever have been their seat? Have they ever visited any land, however congenial in climate or situation, which has not been blessed with freedom? Spain, Portugal, Turkey, and the whole void extent of the eastern world, where unbounded wealth was lavished in gorgeous magnificence, undirected by taste, unbrightened by genius, and undignified by knowledge, are striking exemplifications of this truth; and we may observe, that Naples and Sicily, though on the same soil, and beneath the same sun, that produced in the modern republics of Italy.

* I might enumerate a long and brilliant list of names that are, and will be, the boast of our country in the fine arts; but I will only name a few of the living and the dead, whose genius has given it lustre—Inigo Jones, Sir Christopher Wren, the late Mr. Starke, and the present Mr. W. Playfair of Edinburgh, in architecture; Sir Joshua Reynolds, Hogarth, West, Wilkie, Allan, Wilson, Williams of Edinburgh, and Turner, in painting; and Flaxman and Chantry, in sculpture.

a degree of excellence in science, literature, poetry, painting, and sculpture, that almost surpassed her ancient greatness,—as they have known no gleam of liberty, have seen no school of art or literature. Modern Rome, which never hailed the reign of freedom, has produced no celebrated poets, philosophers, or artists; for it has been well observed, that almost all the great men which she can boast, both in past and present times, have been transplanted thither from other states.*

I will not stop to inquire whether commerce, wealth and prosperity, which are the inseparable attendants of freedom, may not at least equally contribute to foster the arts. It is sufficient that freedom is the primary cause of all. The fine arts may therefore, with truth, be called the daughters of freedom. Some of them, indeed, have been enslaved. Music, "heavenly maid!" corrupted from those youthful days "when first in early Greece she sung," and Dancing, (if indeed the nymph be of legitimate birth,) have enlisted themselves in the service of Despotism; and architecture, we know, has been the slave of princes. But those nobler arts which demand the higher energies of mind, and the force of original genius, can live only in the atmosphere of freedom. It would not perhaps be difficult to trace the cause of this, and to show, that, beneath her influence, the mind becomes more active and vigorous, learns to trust to its own powers, and to exert them with more energy and success. But I know you are laughing at me all this time for laying down grave truths to you with so much wisdom and self-complacency. At the same time, let me tell you, that they *are* truths, however you may laugh, and however little dignified by years or knowledge may be the person by whom they are propounded; they are truths, moreover, that would lead to a thousand others equally just and evident; and, therefore, for my own sake as much as yours, I shall forego any further discussion of them at present;—especially as I am very sleepy, which may possibly be your case also.

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* Tacitus somewhere observes, that after the battle of Actium, Rome never produced a single great genius.

LETTER II.

From the Tower of the Palazzo Vecchio, this morning, we gave a farewell look to the white villas, gay gardens, and hanging vineyards, that cover the beautiful slope of Fiesole, gracefully rising immediately from the city.

We gazed with no common interest at the convent on its utmost summit, where our own Milton spent many weeks in retirement, and where he loved to meditate, amidst the Etruscan ruins of its ancient city,

"At evening, on the top of Fiesole."

The long range of the snowy Apennines rose behind it, the glittering points of which seemed to pierce the bright blue sky; and the eye, pursuing in imagination the upward course of the Arno through the wanderings of its beautiful vale, seemed to penetrate into the deep secluded recesses of Vallombrosa, amidst whose ancient woods and haunted stream, the Muse once visited Milton in dreams of Paradise. The deep wintry snows of the Apennines at present barred all approach to the now-deserted Convent, and we lamented that we were too late to see the autumnal beauty of "the fallen leaf in Vallombrosa." No spot of his native land recalls our greatest poet so strongly to mind as the scenes in the vicinity of Florence, which he has consecrated in immortal verse; and the remembrance that Milton, in the days of his youthful enthusiasm, while yet the fair face of Nature was open to his undarkened eye, had wandered in these delightful vales, felt all their enchantment, and drank inspiration from their beauty, gave them redoubled charms to our eyes. Short as was my first visit to the banks of the Arno, I shall remember it with feelings of delight, even if it be my lot to see them no more. But we left Florence with the hope that when the voice of Spring wakes again in these valleys, and the sunshine of Summer restores them to fertility and beauty, we shall revisit the shades of Tuscany.

It was difficult to remember that December was far advanced, as, beneath the brilliant beams of an Italian sun, we pursued our journey to Siena. The hedges on either side were covered with the luxuriant laurustinus, just bursting into full bloom, the creeping clematis, and the dark-green foliage of the sweet-scented bay.

The pale saddened hue of the olive, in full leaf, and covered with its blackening fruit, contrasted well with the deep rich tints of the majestic oak-trees, whose foliage, though brown and withered, still clung to their ancient ivy-covered branches, and shed the lingering beauties of autumn over the stern features of winter.

After all, vineyards and olive groves may make a better figure on paper or in poetry, but, in reality, no tree is comparable in beauty to the oak. Its ramifications are so fine, its form so gigantic, its character so grand and venerable! To us, indeed, it has a beauty greater even than these—for it recalls to us, in every distant land, the image of our native country. And of it we cannot think without a sensation of pride as well as pleasure; for however blest others may be in natural advantages and riches, how comparatively wretched is the condition of man in all! The North of Italy, however, presents a most favourable contrast in all respects to the South of France, which we have so lately quitted; for never was it my lot to traverse so dull and uninteresting a country.

In that land of romance and fable, neither fields nor forest trees, nor houses nor enclosures, nor men nor beasts, meet the view; but a white arid soil is covered with stunted olives that might be mistaken for pollard willows; and with vineyards so dwarfish and so cut short, that currant bushes might disdain a comparison with them.

The slovenly neglected appearance of the country; the total want of wood, of corn, and of pasture, of animals, and even of birds; its general desertion both by the proprietor and the peasant, and the absence of all marks of life and human habitation, have a most melancholy effect, and accord but too well with the heartless and discontented appearance of the people, who herd together in villages composed of long narrow streets of miserable

hovels, the filth and wretchedness of which I shall never forget. Not a single neat cottage by the way-side, or rural hamlet, or snug farm-house, is to be seen; even the chateau is rare, and when it appears, it is in a state of dilapidation and decay, and the very abode of gloom; not surrounded with pleasure-grounds, or woods, or parks, or gardens, but with a filthy village appended to its formal court-yard. How often did the cheerful cottages, and happy country-seats of our smiling country, recur to my mind, as I journeyed through the be-praised, but dreary scenes of Languedoc and Provence! It was during the season of the vintage, too, and I can truly say I saw no signs of mirth or festivity; a Scotch *shearing* is infinitely more jocund. Even at that lovely time of the year, in sailing down between the bare treeless rocky banks of the Rhone, and running aground continually in the shallow currents that intersect its broad shingly bed, I could not help recalling Oliver Cromwell's pithy observation on a very different country, "that it had not wood enough to hang a man, water enough to drown him, or earth enough to bury him."

The North is certainly far superior to the South of France. Normandy is infinitely prettier than Provence; but throughout, it is the most unpicturesque country in Europe. France is, indeed, every where bounded by beauty. The Alps, the Pyrenees, the Estrelle mountains,* and the Jura, contain within their recesses some of the sublimest scenery in the world. But the country these grand boundaries enclose, is remarkably devoid of beauty and interest; it is a dull picture set in a magnificent frame.

In Italy, on the contrary, though the middle of winter, every thing looks comparatively gay. The peasants live on their little farms, and their scattered cottages cover the face of the country, presenting the pleasing images of rural life and agricultural labour. The olive trees are of loftier size, and more luxuriant growth than in France; and their pale hue is beautifully contrasted here with the dark spiral form of the columbar cypress, and the brown

* On the road between Antibes and Nice.

foliage of the aged oak. The fields are enclosed with rows of poplars, connected by intermingling garlands of vines, twined from tree to tree, and hanging from the branches in such gay festoons, that they look as if the whole country had been dressed out for some festive occasion.

This mode of managing the vines, however, though greatly more picturesque and poetic, renders the wine made from them of far inferior quality to that produced by the scrubby little vineyards of France; and this is the case wherever the practice is pursued. A curious exemplification of this occurs in Madeira. On the north side of the island, where the vine is still "married to the elm," and taught to cling to it in gay clusters, the wine is of a thin, poor, sour quality; but on the other parts of the Island, the vines that produce its staple wine are trained about four feet from the ground, on low sloping trellises, which cover the steep side of the hills; and I observed that the same plan is pursued in many parts of the Tyrol, where the wine is remarkably good. The short shrubby vine bushes of France, however, in a far inferior climate, confessedly produce the finest wine in the world, so that the goodness of the vintage seems to be in exact proportion to the ugliness of the vineyards.

But I am carrying you, "like a crab, backwards," into France, forgetting that I ought to be getting you on in Italy, and more especially on the road between Florence and Siena, on which we ourselves advanced in the most leisurely manner; for, during this entire day, never did we venture upon any pace approaching to a trot. Wretched, indeed, is the fate of those who, like us, travel *Vetturino!* In an evil hour were we persuaded to engage at Florence the trio of mules, and the man, or *Vetturino*, by whose united efforts we were to be dragged along, day by day, at a pace not at all exceeding in velocity that of an English wagon; stopping, for the convenience of these animals, two hours at noon, in some filthy hole, no better than an English pig-stye; getting up in the morning, or rather in the middle of the night, about four hours before day-break; and when, by our labours, we have achieved a distance, often of thirty miles, we are put up for the night in whatever wretched *Osteria*

our evil destiny may have conducted ourselves and our mules to.

This is the regular process; and after being operated upon in this manner for six days, we are to arrive at Rome, a journey of about 150 English miles. It is an admirable exemplification of the wonderful effects of patience and perseverance: for our progress is so nearly imperceptible, that no one, *a priori*, seeing the rate at which we move, could conjecture we should ever get there at all. We did not set out till about eleven this morning, having only half a day's journey to perform; and yet long before we reached our destination we beheld the magnificent spectacle of the sun setting in a flood of glory; while the beautiful star of evening lighted her lamp in the western sky, and the full glowing moon rose majestically behind the Apennines, to light us on our way through the vales of Tuscany.

Without any romance, I do assure you the moon *does* look larger, and shines with far more warmth and brilliancy, in the sky of Italy, than amidst the fogs and vapours of England; a thing by no means unreasonable or unaccountable.

The scenery through which we passed in our journey to-day was singularly beautiful. Sometimes winding round the sides of the hills, we looked down into peaceful valleys among the mountains, in whose sheltered bosom lay scattered cottages, shaded with olive-trees, and surrounded with fields of the richest fertility. Our road lay a long time through a narrow but beautiful vale, and by the side of a clear rippling stream, half hid by wood, the name of which our stupid *Vetturino* could not tell us. We passed through the little towns of San Casciano and Tavernella,—how much happier looking, than the dirty, neglected, and ruinous villages of the South of France!

In an early part of our pilgrimage we passed some convents, whose gray walls, half concealed by the deep shade of the columbar cypress and spreading pine, are still the habitation of the secluded monk; rich and luxurious no longer. The vast endowments and possessions of the cloister are every where gone, and its votaries

are now abandoned to poverty (not voluntary) and neglect. Not far from Florence, in a commanding eminence, stands the *Certosa* (Chartreuse,) or Convent of Carthusians, where the late unfortunate Pontiff, Pius VI., first found a retreat in his exile, and from whence he was forcibly, and almost ignominiously, dragged, at the age of eighty, to perish in a foreign jail.

It is singular that the representative of St. Peter has received from the Catholic French only insult and outrage, and from the Protestant English, respect and protection.

About six miles from Florence we passed the Church and Convent of Sta. Maria dell' Imprunata, which, while its pecuniary wealth has passed away, still retains, what no doubt its reverend fathers esteem a far more valuable treasure, a miraculous image of the Virgin, found many ages ago buried under ground, on the very spot where the church built in her honour now stands. More than a century ago, the history of the miracles she had wrought filled a huge quarto volume; and, as I am credibly informed, she has gone on working them unceasingly ever since, I wonder what number of quartos would contain the list now? I was assured by the *Vetturino*, that whenever any body asked any thing of her, she did it for them directly; and he gave me some most marvellous details of her performances.

She is transported to Florence in great state, and met by the priests and magistrates, nay, often by the Grand Duke in person, and carried in procession through the streets, whenever there is any public blessing to be procured, or any public calamity to be averted; when, for example. rain is wanted, or an inundation dreaded; and she generally rests, after her fatigues, for some days in the Cathedral, before she sets out on her journey back, to this her fixed abode.

She is thought to be a surer defence against an enemy, than either generals or armies, and cures diseases better than any doctor; nay, she actually delivered the city from the last pestilence, about two hundred years ago; so that her claims to be at the head of the faculty are incontestable. I was curious to know the particulars of the ori-

ginal discovery of such an invaluable Madonna, and learnt, that discontented at her long confinement under ground, which was indeed a most natural feeling, she took the opportunity, when some peasants were digging above her head, to make her situation known by loud cries. More, I make no doubt, I might have heard, but an unlucky fit of laughter, which seized me at this part of the narration, so shocked the piety of our *Vetturino*, that he actually crossed himself with horror, and leaving the rest of her edifying story untold, he returned to his mules, by the side of which he walks three-fourths of the way.

We arrived late at the little inn of Poggibonzi, where we are to sleep, and which is by no means uncomfortable for a country inn in Italy. To be sure it smokes so incessantly, that we are compelled to sit with open windows, though the air is extremely cold; but this is no uncommon occurrence. The house is tolerably clean, and the room I am writing in is very tastefully ornamented with some elegant angels painted in fresco, the beauties of which must beguile the time whilst we are waiting for the repast, which it is the *Vetturino's* care to furnish. This plan of being fed like the mules by him, may perhaps surprise you; but it is customary with those who adopt this agreeable mode of travelling, and it has the advantage of saving one from the alternative of gross imposition, or incessant wrangling at all the *Osterias*, as well as of sometimes getting one a dinner by the *Vetturino's* interest, where otherwise none would be to be had; for the publicans in Italy calculate well on the best subjects for cheating, and generally select unlucky *forestieri* like us, whom they never expect to see again; whereas they are very assiduous to please the *Vetturini*, who are their constant customers, and are a numerous, and, in their line, an important body in Italy. Our *Vetturino* has promised us an excellent dinner, or, as he calls it, supper; for the lower order of Italians still seem to preserve the classical custom of making their principal meal in the evening, about seven o'clock. I cannot but think that this plan, pursued by the higher order of English, the *Vetturinos*, and the old Romans, is a very sensible one, as it allows

time for the active business or pursuits of the day to be over before assembling at the social board. But here it comes! "*Eccola*," says the Cameriere, placing on the table the *minestra*, or soup, in a huge tureen, containing plenty of hot water, with some half-boiled macaroni in it. If you don't like this kind of soup, you may have bread boiled in water; it is all the same. There is always a plate of grated parmesan cheese, to mix with the *minestra*, of whatever sort it may be, without which even Italian palates could never tolerate such a potion. This is generally followed by a *frittura*, which consists of liver, brains, or something of that sort, fried in oil. Then comes the *'rosto*, which to-day appears in the shape of half of a starved turkey, attended by some other undescribable dish, smelling strong of garlic.

Would you like to dine with us? But I cannot wait for your answer, being hungry. So good night.

LETTER III.

Exactly at five o'clock we left the village of Poggibonzi, and commenced our pilgrimage by the cold pale moon-light of morning, which shone brightly on the white frosty earth, but no longer shed the same glowing beam that had lighted our evening journey. The air was intensely cold; and though the sun rose at last with splendour in the clear blue sky, it was only beneath his noontide rays that the frozen ground, or our still more frozen persons, yielded to his genial influence.

Siena stands on the top of an ugly hill, unsheltered by a single tree from the blasts of winter, and equally unshaded from the heats of summer, at the very verge of the fertile region of Tuscany, and bordering upon a sterile and desolate tract, which extends many miles to the southward. I cannot give you any adequate idea of the utter nakedness of this singular waste, which is so completely destitute of all kinds of vegetation, that not a weed

nor a single blade of grass, nor heath, nor lichen, meets the eye over its whole extent, while its bare and broken surface is heaved up into small abrupt mounds or hillocks, of pale arid hue, which have every appearance of having been formed in some crisis of volcanic erruption. Indeed, the whole country is composed of nothing but the matter, or the refuse, of this terrific agent. Strange! that when for more than three thousand years, at least, we know that these flames have been quenched—when even tradition preserves no trace of their existence—their effects should still be so visible to the eye, even of the most inadvertent traveller!

The *tufo*, which I now saw for the first time, and of which almost all the low hills about Siena are composed, is so soft as to break and crumble in the hand like friable sandstone. It is of a gray colour, and frequently of an aggregate formation, and is supposed to be composed of the ashes, mixed with the boiling water and mud, which are thrown out in immense quantity in all volcanic eruptions. But all this scene of desolation is on the south side of Siena. I forget that we are still on the north, and that I must get you through it—no easy matter; for the hills are so many and so steep, and the streets are so slippery and so narrow, that they seem never to have been intended for the ordinary purposes of passage; and, in fact, there is a considerable part of the town into which no carriage can penetrate.

The pavement is generally of brick, placed angularly; it seems to be exactly the *opus spicatum* of the ancients, so called from its resemblance to the way the grains are set in an ear of wheat.*

The city has an antiquated appearance; its streets, or rather lanes, are lined with high gloomy old-fashioned houses, looking like jails, and called, or rather miscalled, palaces, which have fallen into decay like their possessors, who are too proud to resign, and too poor to inhabit them.

Many of them are furnished with high towers for defence. It is curious to see fortified dwelling-houses in the

* WINKELMAN sur l' Architecture, chap. i. 62.

midst of cities. That "every man's house is his castle," seems to be true in a very different sense in Italy from what it is in England. Here, indeed, they were calculated to stand a siege, and are monuments of that age of feudal strife, in which the proud Barons waged continual war with each other, and the sword never rested in its scabbard. They are common at Pisa, Bologna, Florence, and every city which was once a republic. The sight of the Wolf and the Twins, erected in various conspicuous situations, carried us back from these barbarous republics to the glorious republic of Rome, from which Siena claims descent. But I will spare you a dissertation on its history, as I have not made any new discoveries therein, and see no reason why I should repeat the old ones, which are detailed in a thousand books, in which you may find a full and authentic account of its Etruscan origin,—of the Roman colony which, in the days of Augustus, peopled *Sena Julia*—of its rise as a modern republic, of its revolutions, its inveterate animosities, its bloody wars, its prosperity, its decline, and its fall. Times are changed since 100,000 armed citizens marched out of its gates; for through the whole of its deserted extent scarcely 12,000 inhabitants can now be numbered. Dante has indelibly affixed the epithet of "vain" to Siena. How far it is merited, no passing stranger can determine.

It still retains its boasted superiority in language over every other city of Italy. But we were so unlucky as scarcely to hear it; the *cameriere* at the inn having, in an evil hour, acquired a small smattering of French, could not be induced to utter any thing else; and the old toothless lacquey, who conducted us through the town, from some natural defect in articulation, could speak no language intelligibly. The customary whine of the beggars, the most frequent sound in all Italian towns, seemed to our transalpine ears, not more than usually melodious; and the little we conversed with others, was sufficient to convince us, that if Siena boasts in the highest perfection the true Tuscan dialect, it is also infected with the true Tuscan pronunciation, in which the delightful harmony of the language is wholly lost; and though somewhat softened from the twang of Florence, still every initial

C and G, even here, are pronounced like an H, and the strong aspirations and harsh guttural sounds are extremely offensive to the ear.

The *Duomo*, or Cathedral, is one of the largest, heaviest, and most magnificent churches of Italy. The tower of the *campanile*, or belfry, is here attached to the building; but the whole, like Florence, is built of alternate layers of black and white marble: like Florence too, it is a work of the thirteenth century, and of that architecture which they have the impudence here to call Gothic, though it might with far more propriety be denominated barbarous. It stands on an elevated platform of white marble, to which you ascend by a flight of steps running along the whole breadth of its front, and enter by three principal doors. Few will stop to criticise a pile of such greatness and magnificence, adorned with such labour, and formed with such costly materials. But it is to these *too* splendid materials, that alternation of colour, and that overpowering profusion of ornament, that I object. Marble sounds more magnificently; but stone, in my humble opinion, is infinitely better adapted for exterior building: it looks nearly as well even at first, sustains far less injury from time and exposure to weather, and when marble would be stained, moss-covered and decayed by age, it preserves a smooth, solid, and unspotted surface; but whatever may be thought on this head, the mixture of contrasting colours, either in marble, or any other kind of buildings, must ever be offensive to the eye of taste. Only conceive what would be the effect of Westminster Abbey or York Minster covered from top to bottom with black and white horizontal stripes!—Yet such are the cathedrals of Florence and Siena. Equally remote from the venerable majesty of the Gothic aisle, or the lengthening beauty of the Grecian colonnade, here —round, heavy Gothic arches rest their unmerciful weight on deformed Grecian pillars, and a load of ornament frittered away into little mean details, overruns every part of the edifice, perplexing the wearied eye with its useless intricacies.

The slender supporting columns of the huge massive door-ways rest on the backs of crouching Lions; a bar-

barism we observed through the whole of the Milanese, and which, I believe, is of Lombard origin.

In the interior, nothing meets the eye but the pomp of marble magnificence. Above your head the lofty dome, and azure vault, studded with golden stars, represent the glories of the firmament; and beneath your feet is spread a pavement which was the work of ages, for four centuries passed away before it was completed,

Solely by means of a dark-gray marble, inlaid upon a white ground, is represented with all the force of painting, various events of sacred history, of which the Sacrifice of Isaac struck me with the highest admiration, though I believe Moses striking the Rock is generally the most esteemed. The figure of Abraham grasping his knife, is one which will not easily pass away from the memory. It was designed by Beccafiume, (detto il Meccarino,) a Sienese painter of the fifteenth century, with great spirit and truth: and the ease of the flowing outline, the dignity of the head, and the force of expression, make it rather seem a fine design drawn on marble, than formed of such intractable materials.

After having been worn by the unceasing tread of feet upwards of a century, this wonderful pavement has at last been covered with a moveable wooden flooring, which is raised to show you its several parts or pictures.

The eye is bewildered with the varieties of splendour that attract it in every direction, and wanders from Papal busts to Grecian statues; from the magnificent marble pulpit, richly adorned with basso relievo, and its beautiful staircase, to the splendidly dirty baptistery, and the Ghigi Chapel, on which piety has heaped more magnificence than taste would perhaps have directed.

It is adorned with a copy in Mosaic, executed at Rome, of a picture of Carlo Maratti's, so admirably done, that I could scarcely believe it was Mosaic, and not painting. It is wonderful with what fidelity, both in design and colouring, a mere mechanic art can give back the copy in stone, of the masterpieces of the pencil. The most delicate touches are imitated.

In the niches of the chapel stand two celebrated statues by Bernini—St. Jerome and a Magdalen. The

former is the best; but the affectation of attitude, the distortion of limb and feature, and overcharged expression, the want of nature and simplicity, which are the irredeemable faults of his style, are still but too apparent even in these much extolled performances.

We stopped at the door of the sacristy adjoining the church, to examine a beautiful Pagan altar of Parian marble, adorned with rams' heads and wreaths of flowers, found in digging the foundation of the cathedral, and converted into the pedestal of one of the pillars of the doorway.

At the same time and place, was dug up a mutilated group of the Graces, universally allowed to be the finest representation of them in the world. They are placed in the library, to the greatest possible disadvantage; so injudiciously elevated, that the smallness of their stature (for they are considerably below the human size) makes them appear contemptible, and so lost in the glare of the large solitary window, that the eye can with difficulty trace the perfect symmetry of their forms. From these circumstances, from their dirty discoloration, and their mutilated state, (one head, and various arms and legs, being wanting,) it is not till after some examination that their excellence becomes apparent. My first sensation was disappointment; my last, delighted admiration; and it was with difficulty I tore myself from gazing on their faultless beauty. The air of easy and unstudied grace, the unrestrained simplicity of attitude, the chaste design, the freedom of nature, and beauty of expression, proclaim this admirable group to be one of the purest models of Grecian sculpture.

When Raphael was only sixteen years old, he came to Siena to assist Pinturicchio, (another and a senior pupil of his master, Pietro Perugino,) to paint the walls of this library in fresco; and as he generally gets the whole credit, or discredit, of every work his pencil ever touched, we were assured they were his work. The fact is, that the designs were his, and there is no doubt that one compartment, (that on the right side of the room on entering, and nearest the window,) in which his own

portrait is introduced as a youth on horseback, was executed by his own hand.

But he was sent for to Rome when the painting of this library had made but little progress ;* and there is no reason to think that he ever painted any more of it. This is believed to be his earliest existing work, and it is therefore valuable, for it is certainly interesting to trace the progress of genius from its first faint essays to its latest perfection ; but I will not attempt to conceal from you that these hard, rigid, upright figures, struck me as almost the most hideous old things I had ever beheld in painting. But for the name of Raphael, I should never have looked at them twice ; and long and vainly did I look, in the hope of finding out their excellence. The inspection of them, indeed, raised my admiration of Raphael higher than ever, not from their beauty, but their excessive ugliness. That the same hand which feebly sketched these straight, stiff, Gothic figures, should ever have portrayed the sublime form of St. John in the desert, the angelic beauty of the Madonna della Sedia,† or the faultless perfection of the Martyrdom of St. Stephen,‡ was indeed a proud triumph to genius.

Sixteen years had not elapsed between the execution of these two widely different works,—the extremes of good and ill. What a transition! What a space passed over! He had not only to teach himself the very rudiments of design and first principle of composition, but he had to unlearn—a far more difficult task—all the dry Gothic manner—all the rigidity and poverty that he had acquired from Pietro Perugino—faults glaringly apparent in these figures. Sir Joshua Reynolds felt humbled, on examining his early portraits, to see that he had so little improved upon them ; but Raphael might have looked at

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* Lanzi. Storia Pittorica.

† In the Palazzo Pitti at Florence ; almost the only picture I had then seen in that incomparable collection.

‡ At Genoa, in the church of S. Stefano. It is worth while to go there, were it only to see this picture. It is partly painted by Giulio Romano, but designed by Raphael.

his with pride, to behold his almost immeasurable progress. From what he had already achieved, we may conjecture what he might have done, had not death cut him off before his early spring of genius had reached maturity, at the age of thirty-seven.

We visited the Accademia delle Belle Arti, filled with the productions of Sienese artists. Out of Siena, you see little, and hear less of the Sienese school: in it you see and hear of nothing else. "*Lieta scuola fra' lieto popolo*," was the character given to this school of painting by one of its most discerning critics.—Gay in colouring, free in design, allegorical, fanciful, but not deep. Its pretensions to antiquity reach even higher than those of Florence, and in that alone it surpasses the other schools of Italy. It is the oldest and the poorest, the least learned, the least scientific, and the least distinguished of them all. In a long course of centuries, it has never produced a single artist whose name has been heard of beyond the Alps, except by the small tribe of virtuosi, with whom, indeed, names are the most important part of knowledge. The fame of Raphael, Titian, Domenichino, Guido, the Caracci, Corregio, the Poussins, Claude Lorraine, and Salvator Rosa, has filled the world, and been revered by thousands who have never beheld their works. But who ever heard of Casolani, or Vanni, or Meccarino, or Beccafiume, or even Peruzzi?

Guido di Siena, the earliest of them all, flourished in 1220, while Cimabue was yet unborn. His paintings, then highly celebrated, still exist in the Accademia delle Belle Arti in this city, where stiff black figures of forgotten saints, and grim old Madonnas, extended on gilt grounds, seem made in scrupulous conformity to the second commandment; for they are not "the likeness of any thing in the heavens above, nor in the earth beneath, nor in the waters under the earth." Yet the praise of Guido of Siena was sung by the first poets of his day; and his pupils vainly emulated his works. The Sienese pretend that their Guido was the reviver of painting; but that the art, or such rude attempts at it as these, was ever wholly extinct, I see no reason to believe. In the most barbarous times, hideous representations, or rather,

misrepresentations, of men and animals and landscapes, were probably made; nay, dubious and forgotten names of the painters of such works have been industriously grubbed out of the dust of antiquity by laborious compilers of long disquisitions that nobody but themselves will read. Paintings of the fourth century have been found in the catacombs of Rome; and as far back as our eye can penetrate into the darkness of the middle ages, in whose obscure annals the history of the fine arts had no place, we find that Greek artists (then the only ones) adorned the churches with the images of their Madonnas, some of which are still to be seen in different parts of Italy.

The manner of these Greek artists was preserved, and but little improved upon, by Guido di Siena, Giunto di Pisa, and their contemporaries. In these days, painting was the art of deformity. Even the works of Cimabue of Florence, who was called the father of painting, and considered a prodigy in his day, are for the most part only examinable as illustrating the history of the art; yet he was unquestionably the first worthy the name of a painter—the first who struck out the right path, and dared to study and to copy nature. He even attempted to give some degree of life and animation to the face, and somewhat less of strait, stretched out, rectilinear wretchedness to the figure. He was so far surpassed by his pupil Giotto, that it was confidently asserted by Petrarch, who was his friend, and whose portrait he painted—that the art of painting had attained its utmost perfection, and could go no farther! His epitaph in the Cathedral of Florence, boasts that nothing was wanting to his powers, but that which was wanting to nature herself!

Giotto, the subject of this eulogium, was bred a shepherd, but born a painter. The son of a poor Tuscan peasant, with neither example to fire, nor instruction to direct, he amused himself from childhood, while tending his flock, with drawing on the green sod, or the cottage wall, every object that struck his fancy. A sheep, which he had rudely sketched on a flag-stone, caught the eye of Cimabue, who was accidentally passing that way; he begged the shepherd-boy from his parents, educated and

instructed him, and thus formed, in his scholar, the future master, that was destined to eclipse his fame.

Like Michael Angelo, Raphael, and most of the early painters, Giotto was a sculptor and architect, as well as a painter. His principal architectural work was the belfry of Florence Cathedral.

But to return to the Sienese school, from which I have wandered, and in the history of which I believe I got no farther than old Guido of Siena. Passing over a long list of names, deservedly unknown to fame, I will only stop at one, and at that one, because he was, like Giotto, the friend of Petrarch. Simone Memmi, early in the fourteenth century, embellished with miniature paintings a Virgil in Petrarch's own handwriting, and enriched it by many of his original notes, which I saw in the Ambrosian Library at Milan. In the frontispiece, is a miniature painting of Virgil, writing, with his head thrown upwards, as if invoking the Muse. The Æneid is personified by a figure of Æneas in armour—the Bucolica, by a shepherd—and the Georgics, by a peasant employed in rural labour. It is interesting, not only as an illustration of the history of painting, but as a specimen of the taste of the poet, who directed the designs himself. The colours are splendidly rich, like those of all illuminated manuscripts, but the drawing is poor and mean.

In the Church of San Quirico in Siena, I was much pleased, with the flight into Egypt, by Vanni. The expression in the face of the child is perfectly divine, and in the head of the Virgin there is much of the grace of Corregio; indeed through the whole piece I fancied I could trace an imitation of that great artist's style: his easy, flowing, but somewhat incorrect design; his grace and sweetness of expression, that sometimes almost border on the verge of affectation—but it wants the charm and the fascination of his exquisite works—the colouring is poor and false—there is no breadth—no greatness of effect, and the hand of the Virgin is so awkwardly twisted, and so ill-drawn, that it grievously offends one's eye. It is a good second-rate picture, and there is nothing in Siena which can be ranked higher.

In the same church, and by the same artist, is a Depo-

sition from the Cross, in which the grief of the Virgin is finely given.

But by far the best picture we saw at Siena was the Sibyl prophesying the birth of our Saviour to Augustus. It is finely conceived, and marked by great force and originality of genius and expression. It is the work of Balthazar Peruzzi, who lived early in the sixteenth century, and ranks as the first master of the Sienese school.

Misfortunes pursued him through life; born in poverty, and too modest to contend with proud presuming rivals, he struggled long in obscurity and wretchedness, till, in the sack of Rome by the soldiers of Charles V., he lost all that his labour had amassed, and died in extreme misery, leaving his wife and six children to beggary, and his memory loaded with the suspicion that despair had driven him to shorten his days by poison.

The present school of painting at Siena does not promise to surpass the former. In the Accademia delle Belle Arti, we saw some of the works of the professor and the students, which were too bad for criticism.

A beautiful little Torso of a Youth, and a mutilated Victory, caught my attention as we were leaving the Accademia. The perfect grace, the purity of style, and exquisite taste displayed in both these fragments; the harmonious beauty of form in the Torso, and the fine flow of the drapery in the Victory, prove them to have been first-rate pieces of sculpture. They are of Grecian marble, (like the Graces in the Cathedral,) and were also found at Siena.

We next went to a palace, called, I think, Saraconi, and walked through a long suite of cold empty poverty-struck rooms, filled with a great number of bad paintings, not one of which was worth looking at; and we saw a very dirty Marchesa, whom I took for a maid servant, and was on the point of giving her some money—for she only made her appearance as we were going away—when our old lacquey luckily prevented me, by announcing her rank. She had in her hand an earthen pot full of hot wood-ashes, which the Italian women of all ranks use instead of a fire, and carry with them wherever they go, both in the house and abroad. They call it their

marito,* and it is indeed that marito to which they are the most constant. We had a narrow escape, however, from the Marchesa's other *marito*—I mean the live one, the Marchese himself—who intercepted us on the stairs, and was bent upon making us return to listen to his compliments, and admire his paintings, for which we had neither time nor inclination.

We passed through a pleasant promenade, where the sun was shining bright, and some Sienese belles were slowly sauntering along, attended by their *cavalieri serventi*, all attired in the same costume, black hats and feathers, and red shawls. Round the circle for carriages, a youth was driving his caleche, or *caratella*, sitting, not on the box, but *in* the carriage, holding the reins at arm's length before him, and drest something like a French caricature of an English jockey. He meant himself for an imitation of the things one used to see personating coachmen in Hyde-Park and Bond-street, but had not attained any resemblance to them. In short, he was quite a Dandy or Exquisite of Siena, and he cracked his whip, and tried to make his horses prance (in harness,) and laboured hard for applause, particularly for ours: for seeing we were English ladies, and resolved to astonish our weak minds with a display of such Jehu genius so far from home, he pursued us wherever we went, full drive, up and down through all the narrow streets, and twice nearly ran us over, in order to ensure our approbation.

Siena is a very dull place. Some English friends of ours who spent a winter there found a great want of cultivated society. A few ancient, ill-educated noble families inhabit their hereditary mansions; but even these mix little with each other; it being the laudable custom for every lady to sit at home every evening to receive company, never making a visit to another. The gentlemen are divided among these rival queens, all of whom are happy to receive respectable strangers of either sex—but what is there in such societies to attract? That there are among them many individuals of accomplished

* Husband.

mind and manners, I do not doubt. I speak only of the society in general. There is no theatre, nor opera, nor public amusement of any kind. Life stagnates here; for its active pursuits, its interests, its honours, its pleasures, and its hopes, can have no place. No happy Briton can see and know what Siena is, without looking back with a swelling heart to his own country.

We paid a visit to the house of St. Catherine of Siena, where are still to be seen—besides an ugly chapel painted in fresco—the stony couch on which the poor little saint used to sleep at nights, and the very identical spot where our Saviour stood when he espoused her, and put the wedding ring on her finger! My astonishment was unutterable. I have seen the marriage of Christ and St. Catherine a thousand times in painting, but I always concluded it to be metaphorical, or thought at most, that credulity had magnified some accidental dream into a vision sent by Heaven; but it never once entered into my head, that any human being had ever imagined, or pretended that such a marriage really did take place. Yet here I was repeatedly and most solemnly assured by every body present,—consisting of a priest, a lacquey, a tailor, and two women,—that our Saviour actually appeared on this spot in his own proper person, invested her with the ring, and declared her his spouse. Nay, they affirmed that he carried on a most affectionate correspondence with her, and that many of his letters of conjugal love are still extant. Of these, however, I could not obtain a sight; but I saw, in the public library in this city, several epistles on her side to her dear husband, Jesus Christ, and her mother-in-law the Virgin Mary.

That such a legend ever should have been credited in the darkest ages of extravagant fanaticism, I could scarcely have believed; but that it should have been gravely repeated as authentic in the nineteenth century, nothing, I think, short of the evidence of my senses, could have convinced me.

Leaving the library, which contains a great quantity of books, though I would not answer for their value, we passed through the Piazza Pubblica, a singular place, shaped like a theatre, or rather like a fan, with its paved

radii like fan-sticks converging together, and riveted at the bottom by the Palazzo Pubblico, a building answering to our town-hall. What it contains I don't know, for we had no time to enter, the *Vetturino* by this time becoming outrageous at our delay; and indeed night closed in upon us long before we reached our destined place of rest, the wretched *Osteria* of the still more wretched village of Buon Convento. Thither, when a wearisome pilgrimage of four mortal hours had at last conducted us, its half-starved looking denizens would not admit us into the horrible pig-styc in which they wallowed themselves, but conducted us to a lone uninhabited house on the other side of the way, in which there was not a human being. We were ushered up an old ghastly staircase, along which the wind whistled mournfully, into an open hall, the raftered roof of which was overhung with cobwebs, and the stone floor was deep in filth. Four doors entered into this forlorn-looking place, two of which led to the chill dirty miserable holes which were our destined places of repose; and the other two, to rooms that the people said did not belong to them; neither did they give any very distinct or satisfactory account of who might be their tenants—one old woman assuring us they were inhabited by "*nessuno*,"* while the other maintained they were occupied by "*galant' uomini*."† In the meantime, it was certain that the frail doors of our dormitories would yield on the slightest push; that the door of the hall itself leading upon the stairs had no fastening at all; that the stairs were open to the road in front, and to the fields behind, the house itself having no door whatever; and thus, that whoever chose to pay us a nocturnal visit, might do so without the smallest inconvenience or difficulty to himself.

What was far worse, it was miserably cold; the wind blew about us, and we could get no fire. But there was no remedy for these grievances, and we resigned ourselves to fate and to bed. The two hideous old beldames who had brought us our wretched supper, had left us for

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* Nobody. † Very honest people.

the night, and no human being was near us, when we heard the sound of a heavy foot on the creaking staircase, and a man wrapped in a cloak, and armed with a sword and musket, stalked into the hall.

If we had been heroines, what terrors might have agitated, and what adventures might not have befallen us! But as we were not heroical, we neither screamed nor fainted, we only looked at him ; and notwithstanding his formidable appearance, and that he had long black mustachoes and bushy eyebrows, he did us no mischief, though he might have cut our throats with all the ease in the world: indeed he had still abundance of leisure for the exploit, for he informed us that he had the honour of lodging in the house, that he was the only person who had that honour, and that he should have the honour of sleeping in the next room to ours.

Finding him so courteous, and being aware there was no means of getting quit of him, we treated him on our parts with the utmost civility, perhaps upon the principle that the Indians worship the devil; and exchanging the salutation of "*Felicissima notte!*" (a wish which, however benevolent, there seemed small prospect of being granted,) our whiskered neighbour retreated into his apartment, the key of which he had in his pocket, and we contented ourselves with barricading our doors with the only table and chair that our desolate chamber contained ; then in uncurtained and uncoverleted wretchedness, upon flock beds, the prey of innumerable fleas, and shaking with cold, if not with fear, we lay the live-long night; not even having wherewithal to cover us, for the potent smell of the filthy rug, which performed the double duties of blanket and quilt, obliged us to discard it, and our carriage cloaks were but an inadequate defence against the blasts that whistled through the manifold chinks of the room.

LETTER IV.

We got up, however, at four o'clock the next morning, unmurdered—our friend of the musket and the sword, I make no doubt, being still fast in the arms of Morpheus; and we began in the dark to wend our weary way from this miserable *Osteria*. First, we had a horse added to the three mules, and then a pair of oxen were yoked in front of all, and slowly toiling along, this combination of animals at last contrived to pull us up the long dreary barren hills, whose broken surface, strewed all over with huge masses of rock, were the only objects that met our view.

At ten o'clock we stopped at a solitary house on these wild wastes, called La Scala. It was the filthiest place I ever beheld, and the smell was so intolerable, that nothing but the excessive cold out of doors, could have induced us to have remained a single moment within it. Two hours, however, did we stay, cowering over the smoke of a wet wood fire, waiting till the mules were fed —for they could get something to eat, but for us there was nothing; neither bread, coffee, eggs, milk, meat, fruit, vegetables, nor even macaroni, were to be had; so that we might have starved, or breakfasted upon salt fish fried in oil, had not our *Vetturino*, more provident than ourselves, produced a store of stale loaves and hard boiled eggs that he had laid in at Siena. We had observed a large house near the village of San Quirico, which we passed through this morning, and I learnt from the dirty squalid mistress of La Scala, between the acts of puffing the fire with her breath, that it is a Palazzo, which belongs to the noble family of Chigi, but that they never live there now, and that San Quirico is inhabited only by poor people, "except indeed the canons of the church, who," she said, "were *ricchissimi*." On inquiring into the amount of this excess of wealth, it proved to be 300 crowns a-year! "Blush, grandeur! blush!"

From La Scala we toiled up apparently interminable

hills, till at last—contrary to my expectations—we reached the top of the wild and savage mountain of Radicofoni. It was heaped with the tremendous ruins of nature. All around, huge blue fragments of basaltic rockwere strewed so thickly, as in most places wholly to conceal the surface of the earth. When exposed to view between these heaps of shattered rock, it was quite bare, and looked as if from creation it had never borne one blade of grass. Dark barren hills of stone, rising all around us, met our eye in every direction; it is impossible to conceive a more desolate scene. It seemed as if the beings that inhabited it must of necessity partake of its savage nature; and the aspect of those we saw well accorded with its character.

The countrymen were all clothed in shaggy sheepskins, with the wool outside rudely stitched together to serve as a covering to their bodies; and pieces of the same were tied about their thighs, partially concealing the ragged vestments they wore beneath. Their legs and feet were bare; and this savage attire gave a strange, wild effect to the dark eyes that glared at us from beneath their bushy and matted locks. Indeed, their whole appearance reminded us literally of wolves in sheep's clothing.

The wintry blasts howled around us in stormy gusts; but we braved its fury, though not without difficulty, in order to ascend to the town, or rather village, of Radicofoni, which is considerably higher up the mountain than the road, and wholly inaccessible to a carriage. Higher still than the town, and impending directly over it, rises an abrupt rock of most singular appearance, which has its base on the very summit of the mountain; and on the utmost pinnacle of this rock stands the Castle, or Fort, of Radicofoni.

To this perilous-looking elevation, the violence of the wind rendered it wholly impossible for us to attain, and it was with great difficulty we clambered up to the wretched little town of Radicofoni; which, after all. did not contain what we went to seek,—viz. casts from ancient medals and gems, which, as they are made at the Baths of St. Philip, a distance of five miles from hence, I concluded would be on sale here. No such thing! The Italians seem to ne-

glect the most obvious means of making money honestly. but spare no trouble to get at it by begging or cheating. We were assailed by a crowd of stout, sturdy, clamorous beggars, any one of whom, if they had provided themselves with these casts to sell. might have made a considerable sum by us, and probably by most travellers. In England, there would have been abundance on sale, not only in the town, but at the inn.

The distance of the Baths of St. Philip, the impracticability of the road for carriages, the shortness of the days, and the severity of the weather, prevented us from visiting this curious manufactory. I understood that the water of these springs, which holds in solution a fine calcareous deposite, is artificially made to break into very fine spray, which falls on the models, and in time forms a perfect cast. The specimens I have seen are singularly beautiful.

In returning to the inn, we observed, among the immense masses of rock which were heaped around on the mountain's side, some very striking basaltic columns; perhaps I ought rather to say, *roots* of columns, for I have never seen any elsewhere, and am ignorant if they present the same short. amputated appearance. None of them, I think, were so high as three feet, and they seldom exceeded two. They reminded me much of stems of trees growing close together, and cut down. I did not measure their diameter, but it could scarcely be more than six inches.

Farther down, the young *contadino*, or peasant boy, who was our guide, (and whose sheep-skin clothing formed a curious contrast to his bare tawny legs and feet of a deep red brown, or copper colour) showed us a large rock of blue compact basalt, which, when struck with a bit of stone, emits the sound of metal so exactly, that had not my eyes corrected the impression made on my ears, I should have believed it to have been a large bell struck by a hammer. Though immense numbers of masses of rock, similar in appearance, were strewed around, none of them possessed this property. The peasants all say this mountain was once a *Vesuvio*, which is very naturally throughout Italy the generic name for a volcano among the country people; and it is impossible to look on this

scene of tremendous desolation, without sympathizing in their belief, that it is the work of subterranean fire.

The *Dogana* of the Archduke, by the road-side, reminded us that we here quitted the frontiers of Tuscany, and entered the Estates of the Church; and a mile or two farther, at Ponte Centino, we stopped to give the officers of his Holiness the customary bribe of five pauls not to open our trunks. Indeed, throughout Italy, the *Dogana*, or Custom-house, operates as a direct tax upon travellers. I have not yet met with one instance in which a bribe has been refused, though occasionally the officers are both insolent and oppressive. The creation of a Dogana, not only in every state, but in every individual town of every state, is likewise extremely vexatious, both to travellers and residents, and a measure of most egregious absurdity on the part of the governments. Throughout Italy it is the same; no state lets itself be outdone in folly by its neighbour; and the continual examinations, the payment of petty fees, the delays and insolence of office, the wranglings, the "loss of time and hinderance of business," not only are the greatest possible annoyance to the luckless traveller, but are a complete check upon commerce.

After compounding, as usual, at the Dogana of his Holiness, we were allowed to proceed unmolested. It was dark, and no moon lighted us on our way, through this desolate country. By the last fading light of evening, we saw ourselves alone on a wide extended waste, without a trace of man, or human habitation, or living thing. Here and there indeed, a scanty bit of cultivation, unenclosed, and seemingly taken at random on the waste, showed, by its surface—impatiently scratched up rather than ploughed—that man had been there, though sullenly and in haste; but where he had come from, or whither he had gone, the mind vainly sought to penetrate. It was like the print of a savage foot in the deserts. Here, indeed, man seemed the outcast not only of society, but of nature, and with nature to have waged war. The son had rebelled against the mother; he had ceased to address himself to her, and she had withdrawn from him her gifts.

There was a deep hopeless melancholy in this scene of abandonment and desolation, that I never felt before. If despair could be expressed by scenery, it was written on the face of this country,

"I pity the man," says Sterne, "who can travel from Dan to Beersheba, and say all was barren." I never had the pleasure of travelling that road, but this I maintain to be barren in the extreme. It is, in truth, a sterile and a sorrowful land; and if we saw no beggars, it seemed to be because there were no inhabitants.

It was late when we stopped for the night at a lone house by the wayside, the interior of which I despair of giving you any idea of; for the filth, the cold, "the looped and windowed wretchedness," of this hovel, beggared all description. Buon Convento was nothing to it.

The *Vetturino* had providentially brought with him our supper, or else we should have got none; and it was cooked and sent up on coarse brown earthen ware. Wretched as this house was, it seemed to contain a number of inmates; and the wild ferocious appearance of those we saw, and the hoarse voices of the men whom we did not see, which frequently met our ear in loud altercation, "dread sounding from below," conspired, with the appearance of the place, and the nature of the country, to make it seem fit for the resort of banditti, and the perpetration of robbery and murder. As if for the purpose of facilitating these ends, the doors of our rooms had no bolt whatever. We barricadoed them, however, to the best of our power, and went to bed; but in the middle of the night I was awakened by the fall of one of the chairs I had erected in my fortification at the door, followed by an attempt to force it open. Starting up in sudden trepidation, I flew to the door, stumbling in the dark over the empty dishes of the supper. and extinguished lamps, which rolled about with a horrible clatter, and assuming a courage I did not feel, I authoritatively demanded to know who was there, as I hastily attempted to repair my outworks. I was answered by a gruff voice, demanding admittance. In my fright and confusion, it was some time before I understood that it was for the purpose of lighting the fire, and that it was four o'clock. To us it

seemed that the night had only just begun, but it was clear our repose was at an end; so, wrapping myself in my dressing-gown, and guided by the light that streamed through the numerous crevices of the door, I began to demolish the pile of chairs and tables I had raised. When the door was opened, there came in a woman with long dishevelled hair, a dim lamp burning in her withered skinny hand, followed by a man clad in sheep skins, and bending beneath a burden of sticks. His face was half hid with black bushy hair, and his eyes were overhung with shaggy eyebrows; he had shoes, but his legs were bare, and by his side was fastened a huge knife or axe, much resembling one formerly in use for cutting off people's heads, but which I suspect he had applied to the less obnoxious purpose of cutting the wood he was carrying. Certainly nothing could look more like an assassin, but we were not destined to meet with such adventures; so, with heads unchopped off, we proceeded on our journey, uncomforted by breakfast. No coffee, milk, chocolate, or bread did the house afford. Tea we had with us, but nothing could be got to make it or drink it in.

Our road at first, as we saw it by the faint light of a clouded and waning moon, seemed to lie in the broad bed of a mountain torrent, which after rain is impassable, so that an unfortunate traveller may be detained for days in wintry storms on the cold rocky height of Radicofoni, or the still more cheerless sojourn in which we had passed the night.

After some hours of our usual dead march, we came in sight of Acqua Pendente, the first town in the Papal dominions. Its name is descriptive, for it is romantically situated on the brink of a precipitous hill, overhanging the roaring torrent that sweeps its base, and the waters of which are swelled by cascades that foam down the sides of the precipice, half hid in the cavities their fury has worn, and shaded with the deep green of the wild shrubs and bushes that bend over their narrow bed.

While admiring the singularly picturesque appearance of this town, as we walked on before the carriage, which slowly advanced up the long ascent to it, I observed, about half-way up, on the side of the bank close to the

road, on the right, another aggregate of basaltic columns, some of which, instead of regular five-sided prisms, had seven and even more. They were distinct shafts of columns, but not exceeding two feet, or two and a half feet, in height, and about six inches in diameter. As we had never heard of basaltic columns either at Radicofoni or Acqua Pendente, their unexpected discovery gave us no small gratification; and, as far as I know, they have never been noticed by any preceding traveller.

On entering Acqua Pendente, we lose sight of every charm its picturesque situation had promised. It is a dirty little market-town, but it produced us an unexpected breakfast, so I ought not to speak ill of it. We stopped at a little café, and got coffee, eggs, and bread; but milk was not to be had, although the tinkling bells of the goats, and the tender bleat of the kids, browsing on the rocks above us, had greeted our ears as we entered the town. This wholesome and natural article of food seems to be little used or valued by the Italians. How much benefitted would their poor, unhealthy, half-starved-looking children be, by such nutritious diet!

It was Sunday, and the streets were filled with men wrapped in their large cloaks, who were loitering about, or standing grouped together in corners, in that apathetic state of indolent taciturnity so expressive of complete bodily and mental inertion, which at all times characterizes an Italian crowd in their enjoyment of a Festa; but this struck me here far more forcibly than in Lombardy and Tuscany, where there is much more animation among the people.* A post farther on we passed through the formal village of San Lorenzo Nuovo, built by the late Pope Pius VI. on the summit of the hill above the lake of Bolsena, in order to save the surviving inhabitants of the old town, which stood on the margin of the lake, from the deadly effects of the *malaria*, which had nearly depopulated it.

However, I may respect the benevolent motives, I cannot admire the taste of his Holiness in building a set

* A remark my subsequent experience of the territories of his Holiness abundantly confirmed.

of beggarly cottages in the shape of a double crescent, which makes their dirt and misery more striking and disgusting.

Regularity itself is displeasing in a village, of which scattered cottages, and a rural, natural, undesigning simplicity of appearance, form the characteristic beauty. Its greatest charm—neatness, is universally wanting, both in France and Italy. How unlike our English associations is a village in these countries, where a narrow street of dilapidated and windowless hovels, surrounded by filth, and inhabited by squalid wretchedness, is all that answers to the name! How melancholy and miserable do they seem, and how often has my fancy returned to the smiling villages of my own country, where neat cottages, and little gardens, scattered over the green, present the happy picture of humble contentment, cheerful industry, and rural happiness!

From the top of the hill we beheld the wide expanse of the Lake of Bolsena, which lay stretched in stillness and beauty at our feet, surrounded by winding shores, and woody hills, rising from the margin of the blue waters, covered to their summits with aged oaks, the rich brown tints of which contrasted well with the dark green pines that diversified the woods.

Two small islands, Besendina and Martona, rise from the bosom of the lake. In the latter, according to tradition, Amalasontha, Queen of the Goths, was strangled by command of the man with whom she had voluntarily shared her crown. In the time of Pliny, these were floating islands, but they have long since taken their stations.

At the bottom of the hill stand the mournfully picturesque ruins of San Lorenzo Rovinato, surmounted by an old tower overhung with ivy; the former strength of which, still apparent in its broken walls, heightened the picture of its own decay, and that of the depopulated village it had once served to defend.

There was something of deep melancholy in the roofless habitations, the grass-grown walls, and silent mill of this deserted village, such as I have rarely felt; a melancholy which was heightened by the prodigality of beauty and the luxuriance of vegetation, with which the hand of nature had dressed the borders of this deadly lake, as if

to allure to it her victims. That unseen and mysterious power which lurks in the air—like the serpent beneath the flower—the *malaria*, reigns over the scene in delusive sweetness; and while it suffers the vegetable world to flourish, blasts with its pestilential breath the life of man. The dart that spares the fragile flower of the field, and all the rest of creation, is fatal to its lord, and to him alone; for even the animals subjected to his sway, that inhale the same air, live unharmed by its fatal influence.

A few miles from the ruins of St. Lorenzo Rovinato, we passed through Bolsena, a village on the very margin of the lake, said to stand upon the ruins of the ancient Volsinium, the capital of one of the twelve Lucumones, or States of Etruria, which, if we may credit Pliny, was once destroyed by fire from Heaven. The corruption of its ancient name has obviously given to the town and lake their modern designation. The antiquity of Bolsena is obvious, even to the most uninquiring eye, by the magnificent remains of sculpture and of Pagan worship which are strewed around. At the entrance of the village on the right, stands a neglected heap of marble altars, Corinthian capitals, and broken columns, intermixed with many a legible inscription, recording the names and years that have gone by. I was diverted from examining these remains of antiquity, so despised here, and so valuable elsewhere, by the sight of some beautiful granite columns; and farther on, in front of the village church, stand many more of the same, which are supposed to have belonged to an ancient temple. According to Lalande (that most tiresome of all writers) the temple of the Goddess Voltumna stood here. She was a deity, who, in concert with her husband Voltumnus, presided over the dictates of human will, and was the grand object of worship among the Etrurians, who seemed to address themselves exclusively to her; conceiving, I suppose, that she kept her spouse in proper subordination. Deputies from the twelve states used to assemble in her temple, to deliberate upon the interests of the common weal. Some antiquaries, however, maintain, that this famous temple was situated nearly on the spot where Viterbo now stands. Be this as it may, these columns most certainly never be-

longed to any Etrurian temple, but to some building of the Roman Empire ; for granite columns were unknown till introduced with the pomps and luxuries of that tasteful but corrupted period.

Few indeed, if any, are the monuments that remain to us of Etrurian times. The destruction that has overwhelmed their works, and the obscurity that involves their origin, alike vainly excite our regret and our curiosity ; and we must ever deeply lament, that almost all traces have disappeared of the early history of that singular people, who in the very infancy of society, seem to have preferred, with rare philosophical discrimination, the culture of the arts of peace to the alluring conquests of war ; and to have attained wisdom, civilization, and jurisdiction, while all the nations around them were plunged in barbarism, and the Romans themselves had not even a name. To these, their conquerors, they subsequently gave their arts, their sciences, their learning, their laws, and even their diversions ; and, however little we know of the events of their history, or the progress of their institutions, we may be assured, that a people who enjoyed freedom, and had organized a regular representative government, must have attained no inconsiderable stage of civilization ; for despotism in some of its forms, is almost invariably the government of barbarous states—where they have any government at all. Independent of this, the vestiges of their fine arts, their sculpture, their painting, and their architecture, their statues and their vases, would alone attest that they were a refined and polished people.

Among the broken granite columns,—which I was describing when something or other led me away into this digression,—has been placed an ancient marble sarcophagus, which was found here, adorned with singularly beautiful sculpture. It represents the Triumph of Bacchus. The God appears surrounded by a train of Fauns, Satyrs, and Bacchantes ; goats led along for sacrifice ; panthers chained to his car ; old Silenus drinking, and Hercules drunk. From its greatness of style, and classic purity of design, I should have no hesitation in pronouncing it to be a work of fine Grecian taste and sculpture.

But Volsinium, even according to the signification of its

name, was *the City of Artists*,* and when taken by the Romans, two thousand statues were transported from it to Rome.

To my great surprise, I was assured by the inhabitants of Bolsena, that their town is not unhealthy, even in summer, and that here there is absolutely no *malaria*.

It is difficult to credit this assertion, when proofs of disease and depopulation, so incontestable in the ruins of San Lorenzo Vecchio, meet one's eyes at the distance of a few miles on the borders of this very lake.

It is however certainly true, that places half a mile from each other, and apparantly similar in situation, vary in this respect in the most extraordinary degree.

But it is a most difficult matter to get the truth out of Italians; and I almost begin to credit old ———'s assertion, who lived among them twenty years, that they only speak truth by accident, and are liars by habit;† for every hour brings fresh instances of their disregard of veracity, even when there would seem to be no temptation to falsehood.

About a mile from Bolsena, we stopped the carriage to explore the woody banks of the lake for some basaltic columns, which we had heard spoken of, and our search for them was successful. They cover the side of a cliff which is about forty feet in height. The highest column may measure nearly four feet; but in general they are from two to three, and even lower. They are perfectly dictinct and separate, but thickly embedded together, and have the same appearance as the few we observed at Acqua Pendente and Radicofoni—that of the stems of young trees growing close together and cut down a little above the root. In all the three situations, they are on the steep declivity of a hill. I observed several bits of zeolite intermixed with the blue basalt of which they are composed.

It was evening as we slowly continued to wind our way

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* Hist. de l'Art, liv. iii. chap. 1, § 14.

† My own subsequent experience certainly tended to confirm this opinion in a great degree. I never met with a race of people who had, generally speaking, so remarkable a disregard for truth. I need scarcely observe, that there are many individuals of high honour and unsullied faith; but the general censure, though it sounds illiberal, is, I fear, just.

along the shores of the lake, and through a wood of oak of singular grandeur, which seemed to be the growth of a long succession of ages. Some had been scathed and rent in twain by lightning, and round the gigantic trunks of others the dark ivy had twined itself, clinging to their aged branches, which were twisted round in many a grotesque and varied form.

Dark clouds lowered heavily over the still and wide waters of the lonely lake; and the faint hoarse murmur of its waves breaking against the shore, was the only sound that answered to the mournful voice of the wind, as it sighed through the withered and rustling leaves.

A shepherd, clad in his sheep-skin, with his dog crouching at his feet, was sitting half hid in a hollow of the wood, whilst his flock were scattered among the trees, browsing on the short withered herbage. If report speak true, less peaceful and pastoral wanderers at times lurk among these shades. This forest is noted as the haunt of robbers, and many a bloody deed of murder is said to have been perpetrated here. As we passed along, we caught at times an uncertain view of caves and dusky rocks among the trees, which, dimly seen in the gathering shades of evening, our fancy might have peopled with the forms of banditti; not indeed wholly without reason, for, not a week ago, a friend of ours saw, at this very place, the murdered body of a solitary traveller lying upon the road, with nothing to speak his name and country, or the circumstances of his horrible fate. A vigilant but fruitless search after the assassins, we were told, has been making ever since by the Sbirri, or Papal officers of justice, who, here, as well as in every other part of the continent, are at least semi-military. By the way, I must stop one moment to correct a very common mistake that my countrymen often fall into; —when they hear that a person has been *assassinato*, they conclude that he is murdered; whereas, like the Irish *kilt*, it only means that he has been attacked and robbed— but it is more than probable that he is still alive and well.

Just before we quitted the shores of the lake, a parting gleam of the setting sun burst from the sky, bathing the landscape in one flood of yellow brightness, and lighting up every object with sudden enchantment. The rich brown woods, the jutting promontories, the glowing waters,

and the distant mountains that bounded our view, laughed in the evening beam, and kindled into beauty—such as I feel it is impossible for me to describe. We turned from this scene as its transient brightness was fading away, plunged into the darkness of the woods, and night closed in upon us long before we had ascended and descended one high hill, and then climbed to the top of another still higher, on the bleak summit of which stands Montefiascone, from which I have now the happiness of writing to you. Here, therefore. I will conclude this most unconscionable epistle, which has been scribbled at all odd times, and strange places, but the most part of it in the carriage; and perhaps it partakes not a little of the tediousness of the way, which the inditing of it helped to beguile.

I have learnt now to make very tolerable pot-hooks with a pencil, in spite of jolting. Talking of jolting, I believe I never told you that we are now upon what is supposed to be the ancient Via Cassia, (a way now something of the roughest,) which passed by Montefiascone, Chiusi, and Siena, to Pisa, and was made at an early period of the Republic by somebody called Cassius,* though who he was, and when he lived, seem somewhat dubious.

P. S.—We have just had dinner, or supper, as they call it; and if we got little or nothing to eat, I must do Montefiascone the justice to say, that it is deservedly famed for the most luscious Muschat wine. However, I hope we shall not follow the example of an old German prelate, who, it seems, drank it at this inn till he died.

We left Orvietto to-day on the right, which is also famed for a light pleasant table wine, generally considered the best produced in the estates of the church. So you see we have got into a very convivial country.

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* Sp. Cassius the Consul, who, in A.R. 268, obtained for the Roman people the Agrarian law—in return for which he was condemned and executed—could not have been the maker of this road; for Livy, who enumerates all—even the most trifling of his public acts, would assuredly have mentioned this.

The inn here is a paradise to the two last. Still, I wish you could only judge of its merits, and see the den of dirt and wretchedness in which we are sitting, and must sleep. Pope pathetically laments the fate of one

"in the worst inn's worst room"

in England. How gladly would I exchange them for the best of both at Montefiascone!

LETTER V.

We set off on this, the fifth day of our weary pilgrimage, as usual, long before the dawn; and after traversing for many hours a dreary, unenclosed, and houseless plain, we reached the city of Viterbo; where, having made a sumptuous breakfast on coffee, (real coffee, not made of burnt beans) and milk,—rareties we had not seen for many a day—we went out to see the town, which is very ancient, very dirty, and beggarly in the extreme. This indeed did not surprise us much, when we found there were twenty-eight convents of nuns and begging friars in a place which does not contain more than nine thousand inhabitants! The streets are narrow, and entirely paved with flat flag stones, in the same manner as at Florence, but so deep in mire that it was impossible to see the lava of which our guide informed us they were composed.

This same guide was one of the dirtiest-looking creatures I ever beheld, but he gravely offered his services to us as *Cicerone;* and he was certainly useful in showing us the way through the town.

We paid a visit, at her own convent, to Santa Rosa, a very surprising woman. "Cowards die many times before their death," but this saint has died once since hers —a more extraordinary feat than any I ever heard of being performed either by saint or sinner—excepting by Liston in Tom Thumb, who always dies twice.

She originally died, it seems, in the thirteenth century; but after lying dead a few hundred years, she came to life one night when her chapel took fire, got up and rang the bell to give notice of it, and then laid quietly down and died again, without any body knowing any thing of the matter. The chapel, however, was burnt down, though she had got out of her grave and rung the bell to prevent it; all her fine clothes, too, were burned off her back, and her very ring was melted on her finger; but she remained unconsumed, though her face and hands are as black as a negro's, and infinitely more hideous than any thing I ever saw in my life. However, they say she was very fair four hundred years ago, before she was singed, and that she never was embalmed even after her first death, but was preserved solely in the odour of sanctity. She lies in a gilt sepulchre, on a bed strewed with silver flowers, but a grate keeps prying eyes like mine at a proper distance, and darkness and wax tapers increase the mysterious gloom. This remarkable saint began, with praiseworthy industry, to work miracles as soon as she was born, by raising a child from the dead, while she was yet a baby herself; and miracles she still continues to perform every day—as the nun who exhibited her informed me. On inquiring what kind of miracles they were, I was informed that she cures all sort of diseases, heals sores, and even re-establishes some lame legs; but she does not by any means always choose to do it, thinking it proper that the infirmities of many should continue. I have no doubt that this nun who related her history to me, and with whom I had a long conversation, really and truly believes in it all. She knelt before the saint in silent devotion first, and then gave me a bit of cord, the use of which perplexed me much; and while I was turning it round and round in my fingers, and wondering what she expected me to do with it, a troop of dirty beggars burst into the church, together with some better dressed, but scarcely less dirty people; and the whole company having adored the saint, received from the nun, every one bits of cords like mine. I inquired the use of them, and was told they had been round the body of the saint, where they had acquired such virtues, that, tied round any other body, they would save it

from "*molte disgrazie.*"* The beggars no sooner got their bits of cord, than they became so clamorous—though I am sure I had nothing half so marvellous to give them—that they fairly drove me away. These nuns are all of noble families. They are of the Franciscan, one of the least rigid of the female monastic orders. They are not obliged to midnight vigils, nor any extraordinary acts of penance and mortification, and may see their family and female friends at the grate.

From thence we went to the church of the Franciscan Friars, in which is the painting of *La Pietà*, or the Virgin and the dead Christ, by Sebastian del Piombo, one of the most esteemed productions of his pencil. It bears, I should suppose, internal evidence of being the design of a far superior master—I mean Michael Angelo. It is marked with all the force and vigour, the correct design, and bold conception of his powerful genius, and soars far above the feeble compositions of Sebastian, who, like many of the Venetian school, was an admirable colourist, but woefully ignorant of design. "His hand, indeed, was more ready than his head," as somebody observes of another artist; he wanted skill to invent and combine, but he could give life to the compositions of others; and it is well known that he was employed, as well as some others of his contemporaries, by Michael Angelo, who despised the mechanical part of painting, to embody his designs.

It is, however, but fair to state, that my belief of this painting being done from his sketch, is founded on my own judgment alone. The friars only know that it is painted by Sebastian del Piombo. Still, I cannot think that without assistance he could have designed it.

The figure of the Christ, which has apparently been drawn from nature, is nearly black; it is extended on a white winding-sheet, with the shoulders raised, and the head drooping back—admirably drawn. The difficulties of the position are completely surmounted. The Madonna, behind, clasping her hands in an agony of grief, strongly expresses the deep, passionate, overwhelming afflic-

* A great many misfortunes.

tion of a mother weeping for her child in despair that knows no comfort. This is its charm; there is nothing ideal, nothing beautiful, nothing elevated. She is advanced in life; she is in poverty; she seems to belong to the lower orders of women;—but there is nature in it—true and unvitiated, though common, and perhaps vulgar, nature—that speaks at once to every heart. The picture is in a shamefully dirty state, and is placed in the worst possible light, or rather darkness. It requires strong light, and it is in total obscurity.

Nine friars now alone occupy the nearly deserted cloister of this convent.

There is nothing remarkable in the ugly old Cathedral of Viterbo, except the remembrance that it was there, at the very foot of the altar, that De Montfort, son of the famous Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, (the usurper of all but the name of sovereignty in the reign of Henry the Third,) murdered his cousin, Henry D'Allmaine, son of the Earl of Cornwall, King of the Romans. The murderer * escaped at the time by taking sanctuary in the Franciscan convent, but was at last taken prisoner by the Arragonese, and perished miserably in a dungeon.

A memorable battle was fought at Viterbo in the thirteenth century, in which an army of modern Romans was defeated with immense loss by the generalship of an English bishop. The forces of the Pope, in this singular engagement, were united with those of the Emperor, against the people of his flock, led on by this martial prelate.†

We were told, that two or three miles from Viterbo there is a lake of hot sulphureous water, which boils furiously and incessantly; throwing up a white thick vapour that I saw distinctly from the hill on leaving the town; but we had no time to visit it, the *Vetturino* being, as usual, out of all patience with our tardiness.

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* According to Hume, the murder was committed by two sons of Simon, Earl of Leicester. Other authors speak only of one.

† His name was Peter de Rupibus, Bishop of Winchester. The battle was fought in 1234.—*Vide* GIBBON, vol. xii. p. 286.

We began immediately to ascend the long laborious mountain of Viterbo, the classical *Ciminus*. At an early age of the republic, the consul Fabius, and a Roman army, effected their memorable passage through the then untrodden depths of its forest, and gained on its northern side, their great and decisive victory over the Etruscans.*

It still preserves something of its sylvan character. It is covered with wild broom and brushwood, among which tower some noble chesnut trees, and dark-spreading stone-pines, such as Claude Lorainc loves to introduce into his landscapes. They give, even to scenes of nature, that repose which breathes in his poetic paintings. And the rich broad deep shade of this picturesque tree, contrasted with the tall, spiral, graceful form of the columbar cypress, forms one of the most beautiful features of the climates of the south.

From the summit of the mountain we beheld at our feet the beautiful basin of the lake of Vico, sunk in steep banks, covered with overhanging woods, among whose luxuriant shades autumn seemed to have lingered, as if to paint them with his last and richest tints.

In descending, we observed a cross by the wayside, where, according to the accounts of the peasantry, eight years ago a traveller was murdered.

We passed through the town of Ronciglione, built in a most picturesque situation, on a precipitous bank immediately above a deep rocky ravine, overhung with wood. The roofless houses of its old town, and the gray walls and ruined towers of its Gothic castle, accorded well with the solemn shade of the aged pines which hung over them.

Though no tradition is attached to these unstoried ruins, they speak to the fancy, perhaps more forcibly from the very obscurity that involves them. Through every breach of time, and mouldering touch of age, they awaken the memory of the past; and all the sorrows and the crimes, the deeds of violence and scenes of grief, which successive generations may have done or suffered here, rise

* Livy, lib. ix. dec. 1.

upon the awakened imagination. How beautifully the sun illumines these jutting rocks and spreading woods, with its setting beam! Its last golden glow shines in enchantment upon those gray walls, and those dark and spreading pines! Would that I could convey to you an image of the beauty of the scene now before me! At any other time, perhaps it might not possess the same charm; but in such an hour, and such an evening as this, its power is not to be resisted.

Poets in all ages have dwelt upon the praises of moonlight, and what heart has not felt its beauty? But there is in its beams, even when most brilliant, a coldness—an unvaried whiteness; and I own that to me, the soft and glowing, but too short-lived hour that succeeds the glorious setting of the sun, when all nature is melted into stillness, and harmony, and repose, and painted in hues of softness that the pencil could never equal, is ten thousand times more delightful and more dear.

Poets may be right, to visit the gray and tottering ruin "by the pale moonlight;" but I am clear that the painter, and all who can feel what painting is, should view it when the soft shades of twilight are gathering round, and the glowing beam still lingers in the western sky.

Of all hours, however, that of noon is the most unpicturesque and uninteresting. This is very observable in a summer's day in our own country, and still more so the farther we advance towards the tropics, where the sun ascending nearly into the zenith, involves the whole face of nature in one universal glare. For this reason, too, I have often thought, that the light of the moon "when riding near her highest noon," has not nearly so beautiful an effect as when her full, round orb, glowing in the richness of the evening, rises above the horizon, throwing her broad lights and shadows over nature's face. But evening advances, and the shadows fall—

Majoresque cadunt altis de montibus umbræ—

and throw that breadth of light and shade, without which neither nature nor painting can appear beautiful. The shadows, however, are now so broad, and the last lingering

beam has so nearly faded, that it scarce serves me to make these pot-hooks, which, as the carriage slowly jolts along. I contrive to indite, less for your amusement than my own.

The costume of the women here is pretty and picturesque; a party of them have just now passed the carriage, their bright eyes flashing at us from under their raven locks. They wear on their heads a scarlet *mantilla*, or square cloth, edged with black, and a black boddice laced up in front, the long sleeves of which are tied to the shoulder with a great many bows of blue riband, the white sleeve of the chemise peeping out in the intervening space.

Ronciglione is said to contain about 5000 inhabitants, and is the last healthy place—totally free from *malaria*—between this and Rome, from which we are (Heaven be praised!) only thirty-five miles distant. But it is nearly dark. Adieu! To-night we sleep at Monterosi.

LETTER VI.

ROME, 10th December, 1816.

ROME!—Yes, we are actually in Rome, at least I believe so—for as yet I can scarcely feel sure of the fact; and, as in restless impatience we pace up and down the room, and looking round, see that it is like any other room, we continually ask each other in astonishment, if we are indeed in Rome, if we shall really to-morrow see the Colosseum, the Forum, and St. Peter's; or if, after all, it is only a dream?

But I must take up the history of our adventures where I left them off, when the shades of evening stopped my carriage epistle. I think I told you we were to sleep at Monterosi. Vain hope! There indeed we passed the night, but to sleep was utterly impossible. After travelling more than two hours in total darkness—our olfactory

nerves frequently assailed with strong fumes of sulphureous water—our *Vetturino* quaking with the fear of robbers—and ourselves quaking with cold; hungry and weary, we reached at last the wished-for inn, where neither fire, food, nor rest, was to be had. We dismounted in a filthy stable, from whence, as we could get nobody to come near us, we made our way up a dark steep staircase, covered with dung and dirt of every description, into a place—for I don't know what name to give it—the immense size of which struck us dumb with amazement. The eye vainly sought to penetrate the obscurity which involved its farther extremity and its raftered height. It was open to the stables below, at the end by which we had entered it, a piece being taken out of the floor to leave room for the steep stair, or ladder, by which we had ascended. One dim lamp, whose feeble ray was lost against the blackened walls, only served to make its deep darkness and desolation partially visible, and revealed to us the tall form of a man wrapped in a dark cloak, striding up and down this black and empty hall. Stopping short at our entrance, he darted at us, from beneath a large slouched hat, a look of keen and stern examination, which was rather appalling. Another man, rolled in a similar mantle, half-raised himself on our approach from the ground on which he was stretched, and might have escaped our observation, but for the clatter of his stiletto on the stone pavement, as he composed himself again to rest. It was just the place and the people for an adventure of romance; and we might, if we had possessed brilliant imaginations, have fancied ourselves heroines betrayed to banditti, and made most glorious efforts to escape out of their hands; but we only fancied ourselves betrayed to a bad inn, out of which there was no escape, and we directed all our efforts to getting a bed-room and a fire. After considerable delay we did get into a bed-room, more wretched than language can describe: open in many a cranny to the weather, unswept, unplastered, and unfurnished except by two such beds as it is impossible for you to form any idea of; but as the surly people of the house could or would show us no other, we had no remedy. A fire, that grand consoler of discomforts, was not

to be had. The wood was so wet, the wind was so high, and the chimney so wide, that while we were blinded and suffocated with wreaths of pungent smoke, and while the wind whistled at its pleasure through the hundred chinks of the unglazed windows, our most persevering efforts failed to make a blaze.

A tub turned upside down served for a seat, but we were obliged to go to the long black den of darkness, which we had first entered, to eat our supper, under pretence that the house contained no other table, and that it was too heavy for removal. Our two stilettoed friends were still there; one stalking about, and the other seeming to sleep. This would not have frightened away our appetite, if we could have got any thing to eat: but though something swimming in oil, and smelling of garlic, was set before us, its appearance was so disgusting, that, after a fast of more than twelve hours, not even hunger could persuade us to touch it. If we did not eat, however, we were eaten; whole hosts made us their prey during the night, while we lay shivering and defenceless. This indeed is almost invariably the case throughout Italy. The people draw your purses by day, and the fleas your blood by night.

We got up—I believe in the middle of the night, less from the wretchedness of our pallets than impatience to see Rome; and, after swallowing our usual breakfast of bad coffee, without milk, we were dragged along at a foot pace, which seemed, if possible, slower than usual, for about three hours in darkness, till we approached Baccano,* when the sun rose in splendour, and we found ourselves on the deserted Campagna of Rome.

In answer to our eager inquiries of when we should see Rome, our phlegmatic *Vetturino* only replied, "*Adesso! adesso!*" unable, seemingly, to conceive any other cause for our anxiety, than the very natural impatience to get to the end of our tedious journey. Our longing eyes were intently fixed on the spot where we were told that it would first appear; when at length the carriage having

* The second post-house from Rome. Soon after passing it, you see the first view of Rome.

toiled up to the top of a long hill, the *Vetturino* exclaimed. "*Eccola!*" The dome of St. Peter's appeared in view; and, springing out of the carriage, and up a bank by the road side, we beheld from its summit, Rome!

It stood in the midst of the wide waste of the Campagna, whose brown herbage was glistening in the silvery dews of morning. In the hollow below us, a ruined Gothic tower, shaded by some straggling trees, formed a fine fore-ground to the view of the distant city. Its indistinct buildings formed a sort of long irregular line, in which the lofty dome of St. Peter's and the Castle St. Angelo, once the proud Mausoleum of Hadrian, were alone prominent. Shall I venture to confess to you, that it was with eyes dimmed with tears that I gazed for the first time on Rome? I saw before me the great, the ancient, the eternal City—the acknowledged Queen of Nations—the Mistress of the World, the seat of glory, and the land of patriots, of poets, and of heroes.

Other cities, however great or distinguished, are only the capital of a country; but Rome is the metropolis of the world. Recollections dear to every human heart, in which every nation and people can sympathize, seem to make it the common mother of all. The awful ruins of its former greatness, the proud monuments of its early years of glory, the accumulated memorials of long ages of vicissitude, and the noblest works of art and genius in every age, unite in giving it an interest and a dignity no other spot on earth can ever boast: and as I gazed upon it—all the long story of its fame, the deeds of its heroes, the shades of its philosophers, and the strains of its poets, burst upon my memory, and filled my heart with emotions that could not be repressed.

Yet who, without emotion, could tread the soil ennobled by so many ages of glory, or behold, unmoved, a spot in whose very name there is enchantment? All that we have read, thought, admired, and worshipped from our earliest years—all that awakened our youthful enthusiasm—all that exalts the mind, fires the imagination, or touches the heart, is concentred on the soil of Italy, and amidst the ruins of Rome.

We stood now on charmed and classic ground, on La-

tium itself, and beheld around us nearly all its storied field.

Far beyond Rome to the south, the highest of that range of hills which bound the southern horizon, rose the beautiful woody height of Monte Cave, the far-famed *Mons Albanus*, on whose utmost summit once stood the venerable Temple of Jupiter Latialis.

Next it, on the left, Frascati, the ancient Tusculum, rising gracefully from the plain, caught our eye, reminding us of the classic retreat that Cicero once possessed beneath its shades. To the east, our view was terminated by the white peaks of the distant Apennines, beneath which rose a lower, nearer range of grassy heights, called the Sabine Hills.

The Sabine Hills!—The very name seemed to transport us into the romantic period of early history. In fancy, we saw the spot where the Sabines mourned the rape of their wives and daughters—where Cincinatus ploughed his fields, and where Horace enjoyed the rural pleasures of his Sabine farm. In reality, on their green sides we beheld the white walls of Tivoli, the ancient Tibur; and, farther to the east, Palestrina, the ancient Præneste.

Between the Sabine Hills on the east, and the hills of Viterbo (Monte Ciminus) on the north, which we had so lately crossed, the bold ridge of Mount Soracte rose from the plain, insulated from every other height, the most striking, the most picturesque, and, excepting the Alban Mount, the most lofty and beautiful of all the amphitheatre of mountains that surround three sides of the plain of Latium. Far as the eye can reach, the Campagna stretches in every direction, to the base of these hills. To the west, a wild sullen flat extends to the sea. A profusion of bushy thickets, and a few solitary trees, were scattered over the broken surface of this unenclosed and houseless plain;—for a plain it is—since, at the distance of sixteen miles, where we now stood, we distinctly saw Rome—but it is not a dead flat, as many have asserted: on the contrary, it is generally undulating ground, interspersed with broken hillocks, and steep banks covered with wild shrubby oakwood, or lonely flat-topped pine trees.

Over this wild waste, no rural dwelling, nor scattered hamlets, nor fields, nor gardens, such as usually mark the approach to a populous city, were to be seen. All was ruin: fallen monuments of Roman days—gray towers of Gothic times—abandoned habitations of modern years, alone met the eye. No trace of man appeared, except in the lonely tomb, which told us he *had* been. Rome herself was all that we beheld. She stood alone in the wilderness as in the world, surrounded by a desert of her own creation—a desert which accords but too well with her former greatness and her present decay. It may perhaps be soothing to the contemplation of the traveller, or the fancy of the poet, to see the once beautiful Campagna di Roma abandoned to the wild luxuriance of nature, and covered only with the defaced tombs of her tyrants, and the scarce visible remains of the villas of her senators; but it is melancholy to reason and humanity to behold an immense tract of fertile land in the immediate vicinity of one of the greatest cities in the world, pestilent with disease and death, and to know that, like a devouring grave, it annually engulphs all of human kind that toil upon its surface. The unfortunate labourers employed in the scanty cultivation occasionally given to the soil to enable it to produce pasturage for cattle, generally fall victims to the baneful climate. Amidst the fearful loneliness and stillness of this scene of desolation, as we advanced through the long dreary tract that divided us from Rome, a few wretched peasants, whose looks bespoke them victims of slow consuming disease, occasionally reminded us of the tremendous ravage of human life which this invisible and mysterious power is annually making.

I need not tell you that the season of the *malaria* is during summer, and that, from the fall of the autumnal rains in October, till the return of the midsummer heats, the atmosphere is perfectly salubrious.

Thus the Campagna seems to be the alternate region of life and death. Amidst all the ingenious and impracticable plans that have been proposed to stop the progress of this dreadful scourge, the cause of it has never been satisfactorily explained; and till that be ascertained, it is obvious that no remedy can be applied; if indeed

it be within human control, which is a more presumptuous than probable conclusion.

About five miles from Rome, close to the road, on the right, stand the remains of a broken marble tomb, adorned with bass relief, absurdly enough called, by the vulgar, the Tomb of Nero, although inscribed with the name of C. Vibius Marians, a private and undistinguished Roman.

We soon afterwards saw, on our right, the height of Monte Mario, covered with evergreen pines and cypress, which shade princely villas fast falling into decay, and totally abandoned.

About two miles from Rome we joined the ancient Flaminian way. We had previously, as I think I told you, been travelling on what is called the line of the Via Cassia; and from the specimen we have had of it, particularly to-day, I must say, that though it may be extremely classical, it is very rough. I imagine, however, that the jolting we received ought to be laid, not to the charge of the consul, whoever he was, that made the road, but of the popes, who ought to have mended it.

But all else was forgotten, for we now beheld the Tiber glistening in the sun, as it silently flows through its deserted banks, which are flat and bare, unshaded by wood, and ungraced by cultivation.

If no longer

"Arva
Inter opima virum,"

its course is still characterized by the

"Leni fluit agmine Thybris."

It is deep and muddy, and (which report had led us to expect) neither a large nor a beautiful stream. Yet we almost fancied its winding course possessed some beauty, as our eye eagerly pursued its wanderings, sweeping round the base of the pine-crowned height of Monte Mario. But there is a charm attached to it beyond all that the prodigality of nature could have lavished upon it. It *is* the Tiber—the yellow * Tiber—an epithet

* Yellow is an exceedingly undescriptive translation of that tawny colour, that mixture of red, brown, gray, and yellow, which should answer to the "flavus" here; but I may not deviate from the established phrase, nor do I know a better.

it still merits from the colour of its waters, after two thousand years have passed away; and it was not without a complication of feelings, which it would be vain to analyze, that we crossed for the first time its classic tide.

We passed under a sort of arch as we entered upon the Ponte Molle, anciently called the Pons Milvius, from M. Emilius Scaurus, by whom it was originally built.

Immediately on crossing the bridge, we entered what was anciently the Campus Martius; and at the extremity of a straight line of road, bordered by high walls, about a mile and a half in length, we saw the Porta del Popolo.

Its name recalls the Republic and the Roman people, but it is only the substitute for the ancient Porta Flaminia, the northern entrance of Rome.

It was in vain that our Itinerario told us this gate was the work of Michael Angelo,* but a work unworthy of his genius; we could stop neither to admire nor criticise it—we could only gaze on it with a species of veneration; for, though modern, it was the gate of Rome!

We drove under it, and beheld in the centre of a large piazza, an Egyptian obelisk of granite, which seemed almost to pierce the skies. This noble monument, the imperishable memorial of an older world, meets the stranger's eye on his entrance into this city of ages, as if to remind him of the fallen greatness of Imperial Rome.

A convent attached to a church adjoining the gate, and just beginning to be rebuilt, speaks to him equally intelligibly of the existing debasement of Papal Rome.

On the right are some barracks, which, as they are for Papal, not Prætorian guards, and, moreover, are the work of the modern French, not the ancient Romans—we looked at, you may be sure, with sovereign contempt.

On the left rises, from the Piazza del Popolo, the abrupt steep of the Pincian hill (the *Collis Hortulorum*,) once covered with the villas and gardens of Roman citizens; now, in all we saw of it, uncultivated and uninhabited.

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* An assertion, however, unsupported by any authority.

Opposite to us, the Corso, narrow, but handsome, opens its direct road into the city, guarded by two twin churches, not unlike porters' lodges, which are remarkable for nothing except their oval domes.

On either side of the Corso, a street diverges in slanting lines into different parts of Rome.

We had abundance of leisure for the examination of every object, while the custom-house officers were carrying on their customary wrangling examination of passports.

Bribery won't do at Rome—(I mean at the gates)—a *lascia passare* is necessary, which we should have written from Florence, to desire the banker to leave at the gate for us. As we had not taken this precaution, two of the *Doganieri* mounted the box, and thus, in their custody, we were conveyed down the Corso, in what seemed to me to be a very ignominious manner, to be searched at the custom-house, as if we had been smugglers. A magnificent portico of eleven fluted Corinthian columns of marble, once the temple of Marcus Aurelius, and near the proud triumphal pillar that still stands in commemoration of his victories and his virtues, now serves the ignoble purpose of a *Dogana*.

We were obliged to get out, in order that the seats in the inside of the carriage might be searched; and thus, perforce, the first place we entered in Rome was one of its ancient temples. It seemed for a long time probable that it would also prove the last, for Rome was overflowing. We drove about for more than two hours, and found every hotel full of *Inglesi*. The lucky departure of one family of them, however, at length enabled us to take possession of their newly vacated apartments, which are indeed most comfortable. You cannot conceive, without having travelled *Vetturino* from Siena to Rome, and lodged in the holes we have done, how delightful is the sensation of being in a habitable hotel, how acceptable the idea of a good dinner, and how transporting the prospect of sleeping in a clean bed. But that luxurious idea, with the certainty of not being obliged to get up at four in the morning, is at this moment too tempting to be resisted; so, good night.

LETTER VII.

Weeks have elapsed since my arrival in Rome, and nothing have I seen of it except the four walls of my chamber. I might as well have been in the Hebrides. I wrote to you, impatient for the morning that I might behold Rome: it came, and found me so ill, that, though I got up and went out in a kind of desperation, violent and rapidly-increasing fever compelled me almost immediately to return, and confined me to bed, till it seemed dubious when, if ever, I should rise again. The fever on my mind increased that on my body. Visions of ancient ruins haunted my perturbed imagination. The Colosseum, such as I had seen it in the cork model, was continually before my eyes. I grew worse and worse, till at last the highly agreeable probability forced itself upon my contemplation of dying in Rome, without having seen St. Peter's, or the Colosseum, which, you must allow, would have been a great aggravation of such a misfortune. But, thanks to Heaven, and Dr. ———, who was luckily here, I am still alive, and hope yet to see the "Eternal City" before I die. I had very nearly gone to an eternal city, indeed; one not made with hands. But this is not a fit subject for joking. I have at length obtained permission to go out to-morrow, and never did imprisoned caitiff look forward to his liberation from a dungeon with more impatient delight.

By way of an agreeable adventure, about midnight, on the second night of my illness, loud cries through the hotel, and in the street, spread the alarm of fire. The master of the house (a Frenchman) burst into my room in his shirt, followed by a whole train of distracted damsels wringing their hands, while he continued to vociferate "*A feu! Grand Dieu!*" in a key which drowned even the shrill lamentations of the women. To describe it more classically,—

> "Lamentis, gemituque, et femineo ululatu,
> Tecta fremunt; resonat magnis plangoribus æther."

Volleys of smoke rolled down our chimney, where the fire had originated, and, rapidly spreading to the rafters of the room above, gained ground so fast, that in spite of the promptitude with which all the firemen of the city and their engines set to work, two hours elapsed before it was extinguished. In the interim, the inmates of the hotel fled in consternation from their apartments, all but ourselves; for, conceiving that there was much more danger, in my situation, of getting my death by cold than by fire, and expecting the flames to be got under every moment, I laid quietly in bed; and S——, who would not leave me, sate beside me until we were both nearly stifled; thus acting as if, like the Irishman, it was no concern of ours the house being on fire, since we were only lodgers. At last we were both fairly smoked out, like bees from their hive; and thus this unlucky illness, which was most probably caused by the extreme cold of the comfortless hovels we had lodged in on the road, was no doubt considerably increased by the house becoming literally too hot to hold us on our arrival. To be turned out of bed into the street in the middle of the night, certainly was not likely to prove particularly salubrious to a person ill, like me, of a pleuritic fever. By the bye, I find, from the books I have lately been amusing myself with, that in ancient times, this complaint was considered peculiar to Rome, and that Cicero himself was dangerously ill of it;* so that, if I had died, I should have died a very classical death, which would undoubtedly have been a great consolation.

The weather, however, is truly delightful. On the very day of our arrival we experienced an instantaneous change in the temperature of the air, and, except for the *look of it*, we have no need of fires: indeed, they die out in the middle of the day, and I am now writing to you, though still an invalid, with the window wide open, on the last day of the year. But the sun is shining into the room, and the breath of the soft whispering breeze seems to give me new life. Fogs, I am told, are very rare, and

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* Vide Middleton's Life.

frost almost unknown here. A shower of snow is such a prodigy, that its fall is the signal of a holyday in all the schools, that the children may see it.

There is, however, scarcely any part of the Continent free from cold winds; and the blasts of the *Tramontana*, the north-west wind here, blowing down from the icy region of the mountains, still retain, though with mitigated severity, the searching keenness of the dreadful *Bise* of Switzerland, and the South of France.

While this pierces the natives of the South of Europe in winter, the scorching *Sirocco* unnerves them in summer, laying prostrate at once the energies both of mind and body.

I need scarcely observe, that this last African-born plague never penetrates beyond the icy barrier of the Alps, and is wholly unknown in Switzerland, which, in summer, is the true paradise of the world.

LETTER VIII.

ST. PETER'S, AND THE MODERN CAPITOL.

MANY days have passed away since my enlargement from confinement, and yet I have never written to you; but it is not the want, but the excess of matter that has paralyzed my pen. I am so lost in wonder, admiration, and delight, that I know not how to begin. I despair of finding words to describe the objects around me, or give back the faintest image of the various impressions, and the multiplicity of feelings, that crowd upon each other, and overpower me with their force. My mind is confused and agitated like a tumultuous sea, and thought chases thought as rapidly as its waves roll over each other. O that I could transport you here, and make you a sharer in all I see, and feel, and think, and admire; for I *can* admire, but I cannot describe it! Rome is a mighty theme, far surpassing my weak powers: and, like

a child that fatigues itself with fruitless efforts to wield a weight too great for its strength, I feel I should attempt it in vain. Twenty times have I given up the task in despair, and blushed for my own presumption in having ever promised to undertake it. But, after all, I feel you will not think it a sufficient reason, that because there is much to describe, I describe nothing; and because it is filled with objects of the highest interest, I give you no account of them. The reflection, too, that at some future day you will retrace our steps, and that therefore our footmarks may be useful to guide you on your way, gives me courage at least to tell you what we have seen, and what, on your first arrival, I would recommend you to see.

The first visit of most strangers is to St. Peter's—let it be yours, but give to its splendours only a transient glance; take in its general effect, and leave its details for future examination. Then seek the fallen glories of ancient Rome. Go to the Capitol, cross its storied Mount, and descend into the grass-grown site of the Roman Forum; pass on through the ruins of its greatness, till you reach the Colosseum; linger not even there, but retrace your steps, ascend the hill and the Tower of the Capitol, and from its summit behold Rome!

Let us then first set out for St. Peter's.

You must pass, all impatient as you are, for more than a mile, through the mean, dirty, narrow streets of the Campo Marzo—(the ancient Campus Martius)—cross the Tiber, by the Ponte San Angelo, which looks like a drawbridge to the castle of the same name on its opposite side, and the river like the moat; turn quickly to the left under the base of the castle; choose either of two wretched parallel streets, which alike conduct you to the grand Piazza, and pause at the termination, for St. Peter's is before you.

From the wide extended front of the church, on either side, a grand semi-circular colonnade, composed of four rows of columns, sweeping round, encloses the immense circular area, in the centre of which stands a noble Egyptian obelisk of red oriental granite, between two of the most beautiful fountains in the world, which for ever play.

hid beneath their own glittering showers. But the grand object is St. Peter's itself. What you may think of it, I don't know; but it is impossible to express the disappointment I felt on seeing what seemed to me to be—not a church, but a large house or palace three stories high, with little attic windows at the top. Its dome is placed so far back, from the length of the Latin cross,* that in the front view its grandeur is wholly lost. The design is so irredeemably faulty, in giving to the front of the greatest temple in the world the frittering littleness of the exterior of a dwelling-house, and the effect, in producing apparent mediocrity of size is so striking to the eye, that I could scarcely recognise in it any character of a church, much less of St. Peter's, that boast of modern architecture, and latest wonder of the world.

The crowded courts and irregular angles of that huge unwieldy pile of building, the Vatican Palace, which adhere to it on one side like a monstrous excrescence, are a great deformity. They overlook the top of the colonnade, depress its elevation, destroy its uniformity, and injure its general effect.

Crossing the wide piazza, we entered St. Peter's, and found ourselves not in the church itself, but in a covered portico, the interior of which is beautiful, however ugly the external front. It extends along the whole breadth of the building, supported by gigantic marble columns, and terminated at the ends by equestrian statues of Constantine the Great, and Charlemagne, in marble, which, though by no means *chef-d'œuvres* of sculpture in themselves, have a fine effect in the distance.

Five doors, corresponding with those of the portico, enter from thence into the body of the church. One of the ponderous screens or curtains which covers them, was held up for us, by no fair *Corinne*, (who, it is recorded, performed the same office for Lord Neville, and must, if she sustained such a load, have been a lady of Amazonian

* The Latin cross, or cross of the crucifixion, the form in which our Gothic cathedrals are built, (†) is so called to distinguish it from the Greek cross, (+) equal in all its parts, a very common form of the churches of Italy.

strength,) but by the brawny arm of our lacquey—and the interior burst upon our astonished gaze, resplendent in light, magnificence, and beauty, beyond all that imagination can conceive. Its apparent smallness of size, however, mingled some degree of surprise, and even disappointment, with my admiration; but as I slowly walked up its long nave, empannelled with the rarest and richest marbles, and adorned with every art of sculpture and of taste, and caught through the lofty arches opening views of chapels, and tombs, and altars of surpassing splendour —I felt that it was indeed unparalleled in beauty, in magnitude, and magnificence, and one of the noblest and most wonderful of the works of man.

We paused beneath the lofty dome—which, like heaven itself, seems to rise above our head, and around whose golden vault the figures of the Apostles appear enshrined in glory;—and leaning against the rails of the Confessional of St. Peter, looked down to that magnificent tomb, where, lighted by a thousand never-dying lamps, and canopied by the wreathed pillars and curtained festoons of the brazen tabernacle—the mortal remains of the Apostle repose. On every side the Latin cross opened upon us in lengthening beauty, anddecked in various splendour, which the labour of ages, the wealth of kingdoms, the spoils of ancient times, and the proudest inventions of modern magnificence, have combined to furnish. Yet, with all its prodigality of ornament, it is not overloaded; and while its richness charms the eye, its purity and harmony satisfy the taste. There is no vulgarity, no show, no glare, no little paltry detail, to catch the attention and take from the grandeur of the whole. All is subservient to the general effect. The interior, indeed, on the whole, as far surpassed my highly-raised expectations, as the exterior fell short of them. Yet, notwithstanding its beauty, I was conscious of a species of disappointment too commonly felt, when what we have long dwelt on in fancy is seen in reality. It was equal, perhaps superior, to what I had expected, but it was different; for we cannot avoid forming some idea of any thing we think of so much; and St. Peter's, in the inside as well as the out, was as unlike the image in my mind as possible. I had pictured it to

myself less beautiful, and far less magnificent, but more sublime. With an imagination deeply impressed with the imposing effects of the Gothic Cathedrals of our own country, I expected, from the immensity of St. Peter's, even more of that religious awe and deep solemn melancholy, which they never fail to inspire; and I was unprepared for its lightness, decoration, and brilliance;—and above all for that impression of gayety, which the first sight of its interior produces. I knew, indeed, it was Grecian; but the lengthening colonnade and majestic entablature had dwelt on my fancy, and I was surprised to see the Corinthian pilaster and the Grecian arch:—And that arch, however noble in itself, from the necessity of proportioning it to the magnitude of the building, has the unfortunate effect of diminishing the apparent length, which the perspective of a Grecian colonnade, or a Gothic aisle, uniformly appears to increase. There are only four of these arches in the whole length of the nave of this immense church, and the eye, measuring the space by the number, becomes cheated in the distance. This I cannot but consider a capital defect. You may indeed argue your understanding, but not your senses, into a conviction of the size of St. Peter's: the mind believes it, but the eye remains unimpressed with it.

The windows, too, are mean and poor-looking, and offensive to the eye. It is easier, however, to point out the fault than the remedy; for windows do not enter gracefully into the beautiful combinations of Grecian architecture. They did not originally form an integral part of it. The temples, the porticos, the theatres, and perhaps even the houses of the ancient Greeks and Romans, had none. In Gothic churches, on the contrary, how grand and majestic an object is the arched and shafted window! Indeed, if I may venture to own to you the truth, it is my humble opinion, that though Grecian architecture is admirably adapted to palaces and theatres, and places of public assembly, and public buildings of almost every other kind, it is not suited to churches; and though it possesses a grace, a lightness, an elegance, a gayety, and a refinement, that harmonize well with the amusements and business of life, it does not accord with the solemn

purposes of Christian worship, to which the simplicity and grandeur of the Gothic, and its impressive effect upon the mind, are so peculiarly fitted, that I could almost fancy its conception to have been an emanation from that devotion it is so eminently calculated to inspire.

The Gothic would be as misplaced in a theatre, as it is appropriate in a church. This may certainly arise in some degree from association, but I think there is something in its intrinsic fitness. Before we drove away, I stopped to take another view of the façade of the church, in hopes of being able to find more to admire; but I am sorry to say, I only found more to condemn.

Certainly some apology may be found for its defects in the frequent changes of plans, and architects, and Popes, during the building of it; and in the real or imaginary necessity of having an upper balcony for the purpose of giving the benediction; a circumstance which has been so ruinous to its beauty, that we might say with truth, that the blessings of the Popes have been the perdition of the Church. But whatever be the cause, the faults of the front of St. Peter's are unredeemable and unpardonable. I believe Carlo Moderno was the name of the man who had the merit of all its present frightfulness. It is singular, that neither this Church, nor that which ranks next to it, (St. Paul's in London,) should have had their original admirable plans completed. But we must judge of churches as of men, by what they are, not by what they ought to be; and I must say, that the exterior of St. Paul's, with all its faults—and they are many—is, on the whole, superior to St. Peter's in architectural beauty. Nay, I am persuaded, that if it were of the same magnitude, built of the same rich and stainless stone, placed in the same advantageous situation, and surrounded with the same noble accompaniments, it would be far more grand, and more chaste.

St. Peter's and its beautiful colonnades, (the work of Bernini,) are entirely built of Travertine, or, as it was anciently called, Tiburtine stone, brought from Tivoli. This beautiful material, which is of the sunniest hue, and the most compact smoothness of surface, looks as bright and fresh as if finished yesterday. How much superior

is such stone to the finest marble for exterior architecture in solidity, durability, colour, and beauty!

The colonnades were intended by Buonarotti to have reached in two direct lines to the Castle St. Angelo—but, alas! even the wretched houses which choke up the ground have not been removed. The French talked of doing this, with many other things; but they never did more than talk. Yet the Piazza, when you are in it, requires nothing to improve it. The graceful sweep of the majestic colonnades, the obelisk that tells the gigantic grandeur of primeval ages, the purity of the ever-playing fountains, that delight the eye with their silvery light, and the ear with the music of their waters,—present a picture of such enchanting beauty, that I could gaze on it for ever with undiminished delight: But it makes one doubly regret the wretched taste which has disfigured the front of St. Peter's itself.

Our first cravings of curiosity satisfied with this hasty glimpse of this glory of modern Rome, we turned our impatient steps to the remains of ancient Rome. To reach them, we had to pass through great part of the gloomy streets of the modern city, and were much edified in our progress by the number of splendid palaces with dunghills conveniently heaped up against their walls, the endless variety of ugly churches, and the beggarly habitations, sombre countenances, and squalid looks of the people.

The carriage stopped at the foot of the Capitol, on which not one vestige of antiquity now meets the eye. A flight of a hundred and twenty-four steps of Grecian marble, leads in a slanting direction to the church and convent of Ara Cœli, a mean building, not unlike an old brick barn, which crowns the eastern and highest summit of the Capitoline Hill, and is supposed to occupy the site of the ancient temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. Down these steps, which were brought from the Quirinal Hill, and are supposed (a mere supposition) to have belonged to the temple of Romulus Quirinus, an old Capuchin friar, so fat he could hardly walk, and two young ones, were descending from their convent.

We ascended by a much shorter staircase, or rather a

broad paved ascent,* to the modern Piazza of the Capitol, or *Campidoglio*,† as it is now called, from having been, during many ages of barbarism, the place of execution for malefactors. From the top of this staircase a balustrade extends along the whole breadth of the Piazza, upon which are ranged some pieces of ancient statuary.

The three other sides of the Piazza are formed by the Senators' Palace in front, and the twin Galleries of Painting and Sculpture on either side, all erected from the designs of Michael Angelo.

The palace has no pretension to beauty; and the Museums are common-place buildings, tolerably elegant, and extremely ornamented; but neither faultless nor beautiful, and do their great architect no great honour. Indeed, any architect, I think, could have planned as good, and many better. Their faults might be easily pointed out, but I will not weary you with criticisms of what you cannot see.

In the centre of the Piazza stands the famous Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius, in bronze. The horse has been much criticised; but the life and action of the noble animal, who seems to share proudly in the triumph of his master, are so admirably given, that, like Michael Angelo, who exclaimed on seeing it, "Go on then!"‡ one almost expects to see it move. The figure of the Emperor is extremely fine; he seems to be in the act of addressing, or rather acknowledging the acclamations of the people. I turned from gazing on the countenance of the old martial Roman, and beheld the statue of Rome Triumphant, humbly sitting at the foot of the steps of the Senators' Palace. Surely such a situation has been chosen in mockery; and the colossal size of the prostrate River Gods, the Nile and the Tiber, on either side of her, tend still more to make the figure of the ancient mistress of the world appear contemptible.

But all that the modern capitol could present had not power to detain me a moment. I stopped only to give

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* Called Scala Cordonata in Italy, from the cordon of stone which crosses it at regular intervals.

† Field of Grief or Pain.

‡ "Cammina!"

one passing glance of admiration to this, the most beautiful equestrian statue now left in the world, and descended by a footway at the side of the Senators' Palace to the Roman Forum.

And here I must pause, for I feel myself far too much exhausted with the sights and sensations of the day, to enter upon such a subject to-night.

LETTER IX.

THE FORUM AND THE COLOSSEUM.

I HAD one advantage, which I am taking special care you shall never enjoy—that of arriving at Rome in perfect ignorance of all it contained, for which I thank Heaven. I only knew that the Colosseum was in ruins, that the very name of the Capitol had passed away, and that the Forum had been degraded into a cattle-market, and was called the Campo Vaccino. To stand on the grass-grown and deserted spot where Scipio had trod, where Cicero had spoken, where Cæsar had triumphed, and where Brutus had acted "a Roman part," was all my hope. What then was my astonishment—instead of the vacant space I expected to find, with no trace remaining of its ancient splendour—to behold Corinthian columns, ruined temples, triumphal arches, and mouldering walls, not the less affecting from their decay—to see beneath the shade of solemn cypress and aged ilex, the Ruins of the Palace of the Cæsars covering the abandoned summit of the Palatine, and to contemplate in its distant loneliness the majestic grandeur of the Flavian Amphitheatre.

I stood in the Roman Forum!—Amidst its silence and desertion, how forcibly did the memory of ages that were fled speak to the soul! How did every broken pillar and fallen capital tell of former greatness! The days of its pride and its patriotism—the long struggles for freedom and for power—the popular tumults—the loud acclama-

tions—the energetic harangues—the impassioned eloquence—and all the changeful and chequered events of which it had been the theatre; joined to the images of the great and the good, the wisest and the best of mankind, who had successively filled this now lonely and silent spot; the lights of ages, whose memory is still worshipped throughout the world—crowded into my mind, and touched the deepest feelings of my heart. Such to me is the charm of being where they have been, that this moment, in which I felt that I stood upon the sacred soil of the Roman Forum, was in itself a sufficient compensation for all the toils and privations, and difficulties and dangers, we had encountered in our long and tedious pilgrimage.

The Ionic portico of the temple of Concord still stands in the Roman Forum. At the sound of its name, the remembrance flashed upon my mind, that it was here Cicero accused to the assembled Senate the guilty conspirators leagued with Cataline; and, entering its grass-grown area, I felt, with enthusiasm which brought tears into my eyes, that I now stood on the very spot his feet had then trod.

As if time had loved to spare every relic of Cicero, I beheld before me, on the green turf, in lonely grandeur, three of the beautiful columns of that Temple of Jupiter Stator, in which he had previously accused Cataline in person,* and compelled him, hy the terrors of his eloquence, to abandon his deep-formed but immature designs, and fly into voluntary exile, and open, therefore not dangerous, rebellion. At every period of my life, and long before I ever expected to behold it, whenever the name of the Roman Forum was uttered, the image of Cicero was present to my mind; and now that I actually stood on the very scene of his glorious exertions and patriotic eloquence, his spirit seemed in every object that met my view.

I eagerly inquired where the Rostrum had stood. Not a vestige of it remains—not "a stone to mark the spot"

* Vide MIDDLETON'S Life of Cicero.

is now to be found; but its supposed site was pointed out to me on ground now occupied by some old barns or granaries, between the Capitoline and the Palatine Hills.

"It was there, then," I internally exclaimed, "that the thunders of Cicero's eloquence burst forth to a people yet undegenerated from their ancient fame, and capable of feeling the virtue they inspired;—it was there, in the latter days, he roused so often the languishing spark of patriotism—and it was there, at the close of his memorable Consulship, upon being commanded by the envious Tribune not to speak, but to restrict himself to the oath required of every Consul on resigning his office—that instead of swearing, as usual, that he had faithfully discharged his trust—he made the solemn protestation 'that he had saved the republic and the city from ruin!' while the Roman people, who filled the Forum, called the gods to witness its truth in an adjuration as solemn as his own, and rent the air with shouts of rapturous applause."*

It was there too, on that very Rostrum where his all persuasive eloquence had so often moved the hearts of his fellow citizens, and made the tyrants tremble, that his head and hands were scornfully affixed, after his inhuman murder by Mark Anthony, to revenge the writing of the Philippics.

But the unbought, and then unprostituted title of *Pater Patriæ*, which he received as the deliverer of his country, far outvalued the crown with which that traitor would have encircled the brows of the tyrant who sought to enslave it.

I seated myself on the fragment of a broken column at the base of the Temple of Concord, and as I gazed on the ruins around me, the remembrance of the scenes their early pride had witnessed, the long lapse of ages and the fall of tyrants that have since intervened, the contrast of past greatness with present degradation, of ancient virtue and freedom, with existing moral debasement and slavery—forced on my mind, with deeper conviction, the eternal truth, confirmed by the voice of ages—that

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* Vide MIDDLETON'S Life of Cicero.

man is great and prosperous only while he is free; that true glory does not consist in the mere possession of unbounded power or extended empire, but in the diffusion of knowledge, justice, and civilization; that while it is denied to the wanton conqueror of the world, and the despotic master of millions, whose laurels are reddened with the blood of his fellow-creatures, and whose steps have trampled upon their rights; it is the meed of the enlightened statesman and disinterested patriot, whose counsels have crowned them with peace and honour, and whose exertions have confirmed their liberties; and, finally, that the memory of long successions of imperial tyrants, from Cæsar to Buonaparte, must fade before the fame of Cicero!

But I must restrain my pen, and tell you not what I felt, but what I saw.

Immediately at the base of the Capitoline Hill, stands the Triumphal Arch of Septimus Severus. It is built of marble, but so changed and darkened by time, that the eye does not easily give credit to the richness of the materials. According to the general plan of these structures, it is composed of one large and two smaller arches, with an entablature supported by four Corinthian columns, backed by as many pilasters. The whole building is adorned with sculpture in bass relief, representing the triumphs of Severus over the Parthians, &c. the rude execution of which betrays the declining state of the arts at the period of that Emperor's reign.

At some little distance from this arch, and at the very base of the Capitoline Hill, or rather upon it, stand three fluted Corinthian columns, of Grecian marble, of far superior architecture, which formed the corner of the magnificent portico of the Temple of Jupiter Tonans, erected by Augustus to Jove the Thunderer, in grateful commemoration of his escape from lightning, in returning from Spain, when a slave was killed by the side of his litter. The frieze is beautifully sculptured in bass relief, with instruments of Pagan sacrifice. In front of it stands a solitary marble Corinthian column, which was erected by the Exarch Smaragdus to the Emperor Phocas.

We turn from this monument of a barbarized age to

the three beautiful columns I have already mentioned—the ruins of the temple of Jupiter Stator—the first temple which was vowed to the gods in Rome,* and one of the most beautiful vestiges of antiquity that have survived the wreck of ages. They are fluted Corinthian columns of Parian marble, and still support a fragment of their own appropriate entablature. Fragile as they are, and sustained only by connecting bands of iron, their perfect symmetry and just proportion strike every beholder with admiration.

Near these beautiful columns stands a high broken brick wall, supposed to be the remains—the sole remains—of the Roman Curia, or Senate-house, of which the Church of Santa Maria Liberatrice now occupies the site.

The structures of modern days that have obtruded themselves here, as if to court a comparison with those eloquent mementos of departed greatness, afford an apt illustration of the degeneracy of the present, and the grandeur of ancient times in Rome.

I happened to be looking—not without some contempt—at a frightful church on the other side of the Forum, when our lacquey gravely favoured me with the gratuitous information, that it was the Temple of Saturn! I was still more amused to find that, on the strength of an old tottering brick wall, which forms its front, Vasi† pronounces this old hole, which nobody but an antiquary would ever have suspected of being any thing better than a barn, to be the remains of the famous Basilica of Paulus Æmilius, one of the most splendid works of Republican Rome!

Consigning Vasi's lucubrations to the care of the lacquey, as fit company for each other, I troubled myself no further with their antiquarian lore.

We passed along to the Colosseum by the now unmarked track of the *Via Sacra*, immediately in front of a row of mean-looking brick churches, which bound the

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* It was vowed by Romulus, in the engagement with the Sabines, when his men were driven back, but rallied at his vow, and gained the victory. Vide Livy, lib. i. dec. 1.

† Author of the Itinerario di Roma.

eastern side of the Forum, all of which are said to occupy the sites of ancient temples, although no remains of them are now to be seen, excepting the fine marble Corinthian portico of the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina; and even this noble piece of ancient architecture is disfigured by a church of unrivalled ugliness, built within it, which is now shut up, and ought to be pulled down.

Farther on, we stopped to gaze at the three vaulted arches and scattered ruins of the Temple of Peace, built by Vespasian, at the close of the Judaic war, upon the site of the portico, and with part of the ruins of Nero's Golden House, which he demolished, as too vast and costly for the habitation of a mortal. It was one of the most magnificent temples of antiquity. Its richness roused the admiration even of a Persian monarch; and its beauty was extolled by the refined taste of Pliny. But nothing now remains of its former grandeur.

Crossing over to the opposite side, beneath the broken and defaced triumphal arch of Titus, fast tottering to its fall, but beautiful even in decay, we beheld the grandest remains of antiquity in the world—the majestic ruins of the mighty Colosseum. No relic of former greatness—no monument of human power—no memorial of ages that are fled, ever spoke so forcibly to the heart, or awakened feelings so powerful and unutterable. The art of the painter, or the strains of the poet, might avail, in some degree, to give you a faint image of the Colosseum—but how can I hope, by mere description, to give you any idea of its lofty majesty and ruined grandeur? How convey to your mind the sense of its beautiful proportions, its simplicity, its harmony, and its grandeur; of the regular gradations of Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian orders, that support its graceful ranges of Grecian arcades; of the rich hues with which Time has overspread its massy walls, and of all that is wholly indescribable in its powerful effect on the eye, the mind, and the imagination?

It stands exactly where you would wish it to stand—far from modern Rome, her streets, her churches, her palaces, and her population, alone in its solitary grandeur, and surrounded only with the ruins of the Imperial City. On one side, the magnificent Triumphal Arch of Constantine still stands in undiminished beauty, adorned with

the spoils and the trophies of better times. Above it rises the Palatine Hill, overshadowed by aged evergreens, and covered with the frowning ruins of the palace of the Cæsars. At its southern base, extends the long line of the *Via Triumphalis*, crossed with the lofty arches that once bore the Claudian waters to Nero's Golden House. Behind it appears the dark ridge of the Cœlian Mount, covered with the majestic remains of ruined aqueducts, with mouldering walls and substructions, the very purpose of which is unknown ; and on its height, amidst deep groves of melancholy cypress, stand the quiet towers of the Convent of St. John and St. Paul.

On the other side of the Colosseum, vestiges of the Baths of Titus, and the weed-covered summit of the Temple of Peace, are indistinctly seen ; and on a gentle eminence, between the Colosseum and the Forum, appear the remains of the double Temple of Venus and Rome, the richly ornamented roof of which still hangs over the vacant altar-piece of the dethroned deities. Around it are widely strewed, in every direction, huge fragments of colossal granite columns, half-buried in the earth, whose gigantic shafts, it would almost seem, no human power could have broken, and that this scene of tremendous ruin must have been the work of the vengeful gods, whose glittering fane lies here overthrown.

We walked round the vast circle of the Amphitheatre. In no part has it been completely broken through, and in only a small segment is the external elevation preserved entire. On this is still affixed the cross placed there by Benedict the Fourteenth, who, by proclaiming the Colosseum to be consecrated ground, hallowed by the blood of the martyrs, saved it from the total demolition to which it was rapidly hastening, and merited the gratitude of posterity. That there ever should have been martyrs, one cannot but most seriously lament ; but since they were to be martyred somewhere, I hope it is no great sin to rejoice that they were sacrificed here rather than in any other place ; and most fervently do I deplore the cold-hearted insensibility of former Popes, in not recalling their sufferings before the work of destruction had advanced so far. Had Paul V. consecrated the Co-

losseum to their memory instead of pulling it down to build his huge palaces, how we should have venerated him for such an act of piety!

In the inside, the destruction is more complete. The marble seats are all torn away; the steps and the vomitories overthrown, and the sloping walls and broken arches which once supported them, are now overgrown with every wild and melancholy weed, waving in all the luxuriance of desolation.

In the centre of the grass-grown arena stands a huge black cross, which liberally promises two hundred days' indulgence to every person who kisses it, (heretics not included, I presume;) and many were the kisses we saw bestowed upon it; no wonder, indeed! The pious persons who saluted it, afterwards applied their foreheads and chins to it in a manner which they seemed to feel highly comfortable and consolatory.

The French—who perhaps did not expect to profit by its indulgences—showed it no indulgence on their part, but took the liberty to knock it down; remorselessly depriving the Romans of the benefit of two hundred days of indulgence, for which they certainly deserved to be condemned themselves without benefit of clergy. They also carried off, at the same time, the pictured representations of the fourteen stages of Christ's pilgrimage under the cross, which are again reinstated in their ancient honours, and stand round the beautiful elliptical arena, grievously offending the protestant eye of taste, however they may rejoice the catholic spirit of piety.

There are other of their improvements which have been suffered to remain, that we would rather have seen removed. French taste has formed a little public garden at the very base of the Colosseum, so wofully misplaced, that even I, notwithstanding my natural passion for flowers, longed to grub them all up by the roots, to carry off every vestige of the trim paling, and bring destruction upon all the smooth gravel walks.

We ascended, by a temporary wooden staircase, to the highest practicable point of the edifice—traversed the circling corridors, and caught, through the opening arches, glimpses of the scattered ruins, the dark pine trees, and

purple hills of the distant country, forming pictures of ever-varying beauty and interest. We looked down on the vast arena; its loneliness and silence were only broken by some Capuchin friars kneeling before the representations of our Saviour's last suffering pilgrimage, and muttering their oft-repeated prayer as they told their beads.

What solitude and desertion!—What a change from the day that Titus dedicated it by the slaughter of five thousand wild beasts, and the savage combats of gladiators; when Roman galleys rode in its ample arena in all the counterfeit confusion of a mock naval fight; and when shouts of acclamation rent the air from a hundred thousand voices at once! On that wide arena, so often deep in blood, were now only to be seen the symbols and the worship of a religion then unknown, but which, even in its most corrupted state, has banished from the earth the fiend-like sports and barbarous sacrifices that disgraced human nature. Well may we call this amphitheatre the School of Cruelty! When we reflect that the infliction of torture was here enjoyment—that murder was practised for recreation—that the signal* was deliberately given for the butchery of a disarmed and bleeding suppliant—that even *woman's* pitiful nature feasted on the writhing gladiator's last agonies—and that the shouts of savage joy with which these walls so often re-echoed, were called forth by his dying groans;—shall we not be tempted to think *men* demons, since they could find delight in horrors such as these?

The clear blue sky, in calm repose above our heads, breathed its serenity into our minds. The glorious sun shed its beams of brightness on these walls with undiminished splendour. Nature was unchanged—but we stood amidst the ruins of that proud fabric, which man had destined for eternity. All had passed away—the conquerors, the victims, the imperial tyrants, the slavish multitudes; all the successive generations that had rejoiced

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* The life of the vanquished combatant depended on the will of the people. If they turned down the thumb, (*pollicem premere*) he was spared; if they turned it up, (*pollicem vertere*) he was murdered. Vide Pliny, lib. xxviii. c. 2. § 5. Juv. Sat. III. 36.

and triumphed, and bled and suffered here. Their name, their language, their religion, had vanished—their inhuman sports were forgotten, and they were in the dust.

But let me restrain myself. Meditation here is inexhaustible, but to others, our own meditations can rarely be interesting. There is a charm in these magnificent ruins, powerful but undefinable, which every mind of reflection and sensibility must feel,—and we lingered among them till the day was done.

LETTER X.

VIEW OF ROME FROM THE TOWER OF THE CAPITOL.

I LEFT you yesterday at the Colosseum. We retraced our way through the Roman Forum, now no longer, except in name, the Campo Vaccino, and ascended to the summit of the lofty Tower of the Capitol. What a prospect burst upon our view! To the north, to the east, and even to the west, the Modern City extends; but to the south, Ancient Rome reigns alone. The time-stricken Mistress of the World, sadly seated on her deserted hills, amidst the ruined trophies of her fame, and the mouldering monuments of her power, seems silently to mourn the fall of the city of her greatness. On her solitude the habitations of man have not dared to intrude: no monuments of his existence appear, except such as connect him with eternity. A few decaying convents and churches, among which the Basilica of St. John Lateran stands proudly pre-eminent, are the only modern buildings that meet the eye. From the Capitol (the ancient Citadel) on which we stand, we behold her hills, now heaped with ruins, and shaded with the dark pine and cypress—the wide waste of the Campagna—the plain of Latium, bounded by its storied mountains, and intersected

by the far-distant windings of the yellow Tiber*—the grass-grown Forum at our feet, with its shattered porticos, its fallen columns, its overthrown temples, and its triumphal arches, fast mouldering to decay—the broken wall of the Senate-house—the Palatine Hill, which once contained infant Rome, now overspread with the shapeless ruins of the palace of her tyrants—The lofty vaults of the Temple of Peace—the broken fragments of the upper story of the Baths of Titus—the lonely and tottering ruin of Minerva Medica in distance—the gigantic circle of the Colosseum—the Cœlian Mount, crowned with the deep shade of cypress, with the broken arches of mighty aqueducts, and the crumbling walls of splendid temples—the massive ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, frowning in gloomy grandeur on the slope of the further summit of the Aventine—the gray sepulchral Pyramid of Caius Cestius, backed by the turretted walls of the city—the Tower of Cecilia Metella—and, far beyond, the long black line of the Via Appia, marked by mouldering and forgotten tombs—and ruined aqueducts stretching over the deserted plain in majestic loneliness to the woody hills which terminate the view.

Such was the prospect that extended before us to the south. We looked down upon every spot rendered sacred by the early history of Rome, and it was delightful to retrace the romantic events of that heroic period, so dear to our childish recollection, on the very scene where they had happened. There, beneath the northern base of the Palatine, the little Church of St. Toto, or St. Theodore, which occupies the site of the Temple of Romulus, marks the spot where the twins were exposed, and suckled by the wolf, beneath the shade of the *Ficus Ruminalis*.

Upon the Palatine Hill, which rises immediately behind it, Romulus was stationed, while Remus stood on the opposite height of the Aventine, on the eventful day when they met to watch for the augury that was to determine their supremacy; and when the sword had confirmed the

* The plain of Latium, over which the view from the Capitol extends, is said to be forty miles in diameter.

decree of fate, and the victor had murdered his brother, It was upon the Palatine that he built Rome, and encircled that city of straw-roofed cottages with mud walls. It was upon the Capitol, the very spot where we are now standing, that he erected and fortified his citadel. It was in the valley between the Palatine and the Aventine, at the celebration of the games of Neptune, that he and his companions in arms carried off the Sabine women; and after the treachery of Tarpeia had admitted the Sabine army into the citadel, it was in the plain of the Roman Forum, immediately below us, that the battle was fought between the ravishers and their foes, which was so theatrically terminated by the wives and daughters rushing in between their husbands and fathers.

The *Via Sacra* was the path the two nations trod, after peace was established, in solemn procession to the Capitol, where Tatius, the Sabine King, thenceforward held his regal seat. The *Via Sacra* is said to have received its name from the oaths taken on this occasion to observe the treaty, or the execrations uttered against those who infringed it, and not, as I had always ignorantly imagined, merely from being the sacred way to the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, which then was not built. We traced its now buried line, once tracked by the triumphal car of many a victorious chief, in front of the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina, and beneath the arch of Septimius Severus. But where could we turn, that remembrance did not speak to us of departed glory?

To the west, the Tiber, sweeping round the base of Mount Aventine, whose deserted height is now crowned only with ruinous convents, and with the villa of a barbarian king,* rolls on in its lonely and desolate course through the swampy plain. Some faint traces still mark where its flood was once crossed by the *Pons Sublicius*, on which the single valour of Horatius Cocles stopped the progress of the whole Etruscan army, and saved his country from subjugation.

Nearly opposite are the quays and magazines of the

* The abdicated King of Spain.

Ripa Grande, the modern port of Rome, where not a single vessel now appears to bear the treasures of commerce to the ancient emporium of the world. Higher up is the Sacred Island of the Tiber, dedicated to Esculapius, formed, if tradition may be believed, by the collected harvests of Tarquin, which were thrown into the stream on his expulsion by the indignant Romans, who disdained to eat the contaminated bread of the tyrant.

On this side of the Capitoline Hill is the Tarpeian Rock, fraught with so many interesting recollections; it is almost immediately below us, but hid from view by the mean hovels that are crowded upon it. Nearly at its base, in the centre of the Forum Boarium, we look down upon the ancient arch of Janus, on whose gray walls, overgrown with ivy, the thickly-tangled weeds are waving in wild luxuriance. Beyond the Tiber, and washed by its waters, the long summit of Mount Janiculum (the fabled abode of Janus, and the real burial-place of Numa) bounds the view, now covered with churches, groves, gardens, and villas. Farther to the north, and proudly towering above the undistinguished crowd of meaner cupolas, we behold the lofty dome of St. Peter's, crowning the immense pile of the Vatican; the Castle St. Angelo, once the imperial tomb of Hadrian; the pine-covered height of Monte Mario; and the Pincian Hill, once crowded with the villas of Roman citizens, but now bearing on its summit only the solitary church and convent of the Trinita de' Monti, the name of which it has received.

Till the time of Aurelian, neither Mount Janiculum, nor the Pincian Hill, were enclosed in the walls of Rome, or included in the sacred circle of her Seven Hills. Of these, now degraded in their elevation as much as in their fame, two only, the Quirinal and the Viminal, are populous. The rest are nearly, or totally deserted. The Capitol, excepting some wretched hovels, boasts few human habitations. To the south, the Palatine, the Cœlian, and the Aventine, are abandoned to the ruins of ancient or modern days. The Esquiline, on the south-east, is chiefly distinguished by the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore on its summit, and the Baths of Titus at its base. On the east, the Quirinal, which derived its name from the cele-

brated Temple of Romulus Quirinus, is now crowned with the Pope's Palace, and covered with streets and palaces; and the invisible Viminal, which stands, or used to stand, between the Quirinal and the Esquiline, must also be covered with houses; but it eludes all search, and cannot now be traced. But Rome—Modern Rome I mean—lies principally to the north, extending far over the ancient plain of the Campus Martius, with "her gorgeous domes and spacious palaces." From amidst these upstart structures of degenerate days, the triumphal columns of Marcus Antoninus, and of Trajan, proudly rise, bearing on their tops the bronze figures of St. Peter and St. Paul, instead of those of the martial Emperors; though these warlike trophies do not seem a very appropriate pedestal for the Apostles of Peace.

Near the column of Trajan appears a part of the solid wall of the Forum of Nerva, in which are the beautiful remains of his temple. To the north, the distant prospect is bounded by the insulated classic height of Monte Soracte, which rises from the plain, not as immortalized in the strains of Horace, white with the snows of winter,* but green, as if clad in the soft verdure of spring. Its name is now corrupted from Soracte, to the imaginary Saint Oreste, by the same senseless superstition that dooms a number of unfortunate females to reluctant penitence and hopeless imprisonment, in four Convents on its bleak summit, in all the lingering horrors of a living death.

To the east, far beyond the deep groves of pine which shelter the Eternal City, across the deserted Campagna and on the green sides of the Sabine hills, rests many a famed and classic spot; the white houses of Palestrina, the ancient Præneste, where stood the great Temple of Fortune, catch the eye; and, embosomed in olive groves, appears Tivoli, once Tibur, the chosen retreat of Rome's immortal patriots and philosophers,—of her poets and her emperors;—where Horace and Macænas, Brutus and Cassius, Augustus and Hadrian, sought a retirement that was

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* Vides, ut alta stet nive candidum
Soracte, &c. HORAT. Car. 1. Ode ix.

embellished by the charms of taste, literature, and the muses. In the plain between these two hills, a small, still, glassy lake, marks the site of the ancient Gabii.

Further to the south appear the dark sides of Monte Algido, covered with untrodden woods, the noted haunt of banditti; the graceful height of Frascati, where stood the famed Tusculan villa of Cicero, now spotted with the white villas of the modern patrician Romans, embosomed in groves of pine; and the last and loftiest of that beautiful chain of woody hills that bound the southern horizon —Monte Cave, the ancient Alban Mount, rises from the plain against the clear blue sky, with the town of Albano on the little declivity at its western base. Its summit, once crowned with the Temple of Jupiter Latialis, is now occupied by a convent of mendicant friars; and where the *Feriæ Latinæ* were held—where the conquerors of the world wound in triumph up the steep, to pay their homage to the god and father of the Latin tribes—a few black crosses mark the path to the abode of superstition, and daring banditti infest its deep woods, or lurk in its hidden caves.

There, too, near its base, was the ancient seat of Alba, the Trojan town, the mother of Rome.

To the east, far above the range of the Sabine hills, rise the peak summits of the distant Apennines, glittering in all the snows of winter.

I turned from Rome—from its towers, its palaces, and even its ruins—to the classic mountains that bounded the blue horizon, and felt, that however the frail and transient structures of man may change or fall, the eternal features of nature are for ever the same; that if the temples and mouldering fabrics at my feet, were not those on which the immortal spirits of the dead had lived and acted,—at least, their eyes, like mine, had rested on the same hills, beheld the same wide extended plain beaming in its noontide beauty, and watched the wanderings of the same stream, as it slowly bears its lonely and desolate course to the ocean. Their feet, too, had sought that now abandoned shore, where, in their blissful retreat, Rome's greatest philosophers did not disdain "to count the cease-

less billow."* It is *this* which gives enchantment to the scene, and stirs our hearts within us, as we fondly linger over every object consecrated by the memory of the mighty spirits who have passed away, and cling to every wreck of the times that are fled for ever. It is *this* which gives to Rome, and to its classic scenes, that powerful and undefinable charm which seizes on every mind of sensibility, and makes their remembrance live within the heart whilst life and feeling animate it; and even in distant regions, and through long succeeding years, be fondly cherished there.

For this was the theatre of the world in its spring of youth and vigour. It was the school of man, where he passed from infancy to maturity. That season has gone by —His strength has decayed—He has fallen into old age. —Nor time itself, nor fate, can make another Rome. The Phœnix shall never rise from its ashes,—"Rome is no more!"

LETTER XI.

THE VATICAN.

I HAVE seen the Vatican! But how shall I express the delight, the admiration, the overpowering astonishment which filled my mind! How describe the extent and the splendour of that almost interminable succession of lengthening galleries and marble halls, whose pictured roofs, mosaic pavements, majestic columns, and murmuring fountains, far surpass even the gorgeous dreams of Eastern magnificence, and are peopled with such breathing forms of beauty and of grace, as sometimes deign to visit the rapt fancy of the poet, and seem to have descended here from happier worlds!

* Vide Cicero's Letters. It was also a favourite recreation of Scipio's to gather shells and pebbles as he wandered with Lælius on the sea-shore.

Rome has become the heir of time. Her rich inheritance is the accumulated creations of gifted genius,—the best legacy that departed ages have bequeathed to the world,—and here they are concentered in the treasury of the fine arts, the temple of taste, the consecrated seat of the muses! You think I rave: But it is not mere ordinary grandeur or costly magnificence that has transported me thus. The splendour of palaces may be rivalled, and the magnitude of temples imitated; but the labour and wealth of the united world would fail to produce another Vatican;—for its beauty is inimitable, and its treasures unpurchaseable.

It will, I perceive, be some time before my mind can be calmed and sobered down to the investigation or enjoyment of these miracles of art,—or, as I know you will say, before I recover my senses. At present I am in a delirium of admiration, and revel among this inexhaustible store of treasures, intoxicated with the sight—as a miser, on the sudden acquisition of unexpected wealth, at first only glotes over the glittering heaps, and has not for some time composure enough to examine his riches.

Its ceilings richly painted in fresco—its pictured pavements of ancient mosaic—its magnificent gates of bronze—its polished columns of ancient porphyry, the splendid spoils of the ruins of Imperial Rome—its endless accumulation of Grecian marbles, Egyptian granites, and Oriental alabasters, the very names of which are unknown in Transalpine lands,—its bewildering extent, and prodigality of magnificence,—but, above all, its amazing treasures of sculpture,—have so confused my senses, that I can scarcely believe in its reality, and am almost ready to ask myself, if it is not all a dream? But I will endeavour to give you some account of what I have seen, and leave you to judge whether it is not enough to turn wiser heads than mine.

I had heard from my cradle of St. Peter's: It had been my imaginary standard of all that was greatest and most wonderful in the works of man. But of the Vatican—except of its now dormant thunders—I knew nothing, and it stood in my fancy only as the gloomy and hateful residence of a bigotted and imperious Pontiff. The gallery of Florence was consecrated to my mind, as the chosen reposi-

tory of the choicest monuments of ancient art, of revived taste, and classic elegance. But I had scarcely heard of the existence of the Museum of the Vatican, which, though incomparably superior, has, perhaps from its more recent formation, never attained the same popular fame; and thus its transcendent wonders burst upon me with all the delightful charm of unexpectedness.

The exterior of the Vatican is not prepossessing. It is a huge collection of odd buildings curiously jumbled together, full of sharp angles and strange excrescences; and, as somebody once observed, it is not like a palace, but a company of palaces, which seem to be jostling each other in a contest for place or precedency.

With this view of them, we ascended from the colonnade of St. Peter's into a court of little promise, though its triple ranges of arcades, well known by the name of the *Loggie di Raffaello* are adorned with the designs of that inimitable master, and painted by his best pupils. But we stopped not now to examine them; we ascended a staircase, and passing along one row of the Loggie, painted in arabesque, with shells, fancy patterns, &c., we entered the first part of the Museum, called the *Museo Chiaramonti*, from the name of the present Pope, by whom it was formed.* We traversed a long gallery, the walls of which were completely covered with ancient sepulchral inscriptions of the sculptured tombs of the dead. Among them we observed a marble Ædicola, (or small temple,) dedicated to Neptune. It is a little alcove, scarcely larger than a niche for a statue, or a watchman's box; and precisely resembles in its form, as well as purpose, the recesses erected in such numbers by Catholic piety at every way side to the Madonna.

Entering another gallery, we passed through a double range of the statues of Heroes, Emperors, and Gods, among which my eye was caught by a beautiful, though headless female figure, pressing forward, her drapery blown back by the wind, by some supposed to be Minerva; but as there is no appearance of the Ægis, others imagine it to be Niobe. I was particularly struck with the

* Pius VII. Chiaramonti.

fine colossal seated statue of Tiberius;* Demosthenes with a volume in his hand; Antonius Musa,† the young physician who saved the life of Augustus by the use of the cold bath, as Esculapius; Fortune,‡ crowned with her diadem, carelessly turning the globe at her feet with her rudder, and bearing the Cornucopia in her hand; and a colossal Hercules, stretched upon his lion's skin.

The statues of the Emperors, except Marcus Aurelius, who is always in armour, are all heroic; that is, nude; with the globe surmounted by a little winged Victory in their hand.

We passed on, noticing only a few of the statues, and scarcely glancing at the busts, and bassi relievi, and minuter figures which appeared between them, we ascended a flight of stairs, adorned with columns of polished granite, and painted in fresco by Daniel di Volterra—and found ourselves, as the inscription and guides informed us—in the *Museo pio Clementino*, founded by Clement XIV. (Ganganelli) and enlarged by the late Pope Pius VI. (Braschi.) Before us, we saw the famous Torso,§ the favourite study of Michael Angelo Buonarotti. Although a mere trunk, without head, arms, or legs, it must ever form the model of the sculptor, and the admiration of every mind of taste. At the first glance its perfection may not strike those unused to mutilated statuary; but the more it is contemplated, the more it will be admired. The bend of the back, the curve of the side, the noble style, the easy commanding air, the majestic figure, the truth of nature, and faultless perfection of design, have perhaps never been equalled. It is seated on a lion's skin, and is supposed to be Hercules in repose, and raised to immortality.‖ It is inscribed

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* Found at Piperno. † Found at Veii. ‡ Found at Ostia.

§ Found at Rome, in the Campo di Fiori.

‖ The reader will perhaps be glad to see Winkelman's admirable criticism on the Torso, and therefore to save him the trouble of searching for its detached parts through two quarto volumes, I subjoin an extract from it:—

"L'indication des nerfs et des muscles ou leur suppression absolue, est ce qui distingue un Hercule destiné à combattre les monstres et les brigands, et eloigné encore du terme de ses travaux, d'Hercule purifié par le feu des parties grossières du corps, et admis à la jouissance de la félicité des immortels. C'est ainsi, par exemple, que l'homme se reconnoit à l' Hercule Farnese, et le dieu à l'Hercule du Belvédère.—L'Auteur nous

with the sculptor's name, Apollonius the Athenian, who is conjectured to have lived about the year of Rome 555, in that revived era of the arts which occurred immediately after the Roman proclamation of liberty to Greece by Quintus Flaminius, and lasted during the succeeding delusive gleam of freedom and prosperity—a period of about forty years.

Some beautiful fragments of statuary are standing on the ground beside the sublime Torso, remarkable for the fine folds and fall of the drapery, which Raphael is said frequently to have studied. Indeed, it is evident that his own noble style of drapery was formed from ancient sculpture.

I lifted up my eyes from the contemplation of those beautiful relics at my feet, and beheld opposite to me the famous Meleager, one of the finest statues in the world.*

Beside us was the Sarcophagus of Scipio Barbatus, the great-grandfather of Scipio Africanus. It is of plain peperin stone, but I have never seen a more beautiful sepulchral monument than this simple Doric tomb. Such is the chaste simplicity of the form and workmanship, that it still serves as a model for artists. Does not this seem to prove, that the arts, at an early period of the Republic, had attained a much higher degree of perfection than we have been taught to believe? An unknown laurel bust of the same material, sometimes ascribed to the poet

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offre dans cet Hercule un corps idéal au-dessus de la nature, où, si l'on veut, un corps, viril dans la perfection de l'âge et audessus besoins corporels. Il est representé sans aucun besoin de nourriture ou de réparation de forces. Les veines y sont toutes invisibles; le corps est fait pour jouir et non pour nourrir. Il est rassassié sans plénitude.—Qu'l'artiste admire dans les contours de ce corps le passage successif d'une forme à l'autre, et les traits mouvans qui, comme les ondes, s'élevent, s'apaissent, se confondent. Il trouvera qu'en dessinant cet étonnant morceau, on ne peut jamais s'assurer de l'avoir saisi avec exactitude; car la convexité dont on croit suivre la direction s'écarte de sa marche, et prenant un autre tour, deroute l'œil et la main. Les os parroissent revétus d'un épiderme nourri, les muscles sont charnus sans superfluité: il n'y a point defigure où la chair soit aussi vraie que dans celle-ci. L'on pourroit dire que cet Hercule approche encore plus du tems sublime de l'art que l'Apollon même."—Vide Hist. de l'Art, liv. iv. cap. ii. § 50, and liv. vi. cap. iv. § 51.

* Meleager was found at Rome, on the Esquiline Hill, near S. Martini di Monti. Vide Aldrovandi Statue, p. 117.

Ennius, found in the same vault, is placed upon it; and is surrounded with the sepulchral inscriptions of many of the Scipios, but not of the conqueror of Hannibal, whose ashes did not rest in the tomb of his fathers.

Time was not allowed me to examine these, or any thing else; and I was hurried away, though not till I had stolen a look at an exquisite pair of legs, said to have belonged to Bacchus, (though how that can be proved I can't imagine,) which were standing in a corner by themselves.

We next entered an octagonal court, surrounded with a portico adorned with noble columns of marble, and filled with the most splendid monuments of ancient taste. Statues and bassi relievi of faultless beauty; baths in which the luxurious Romans once immersed themselves, formed of ancient marbles, and everlasting granites, but bright with all the polish and purity of recent finish; Sarcophagi of Emperors, adorned with exquisite sculpture; votive altars, stupendous vases; and more, far more precious remains of the arts and splendours of antiquity than I can enumerate, meet the eye in every direction; while the soothing music of a fountain, the only sound that is heard, refreshes the senses, and makes silence harmonious.

"Sopra gli altri ornamenti ricchi e belli
Ch'erano assai ne la gioconda stanza,
V'era una fonte, che per più ruscelli
Spargea freschissime acque in abbondanza."

Indeed the whole scene of the Vatican seems to have been described by Ariosto in his Palace of Enchantment—

"L'alte colonne, e i capitelli d'oro
Da chi i gemmati palchi eran soffulti,
I peregrini marvi chi vi foro
Da dotta mano in vario forme sculti.
Pittur, e getti, e tant'altro lavoro.
— — — — — —
Mostran che non bastaro a tante mole
Di venti re insieme, le ricchezze sole.

Leaving this court, in admiration of its beauty, though as yet ignorant of the treasures it concealed, we entered the Hall of Animals, which is peopled, something like

Noah's ark, with figures of wild beasts and tame, birds, fishes and reptiles, crocodiles and men, ancient and modern, of all kinds and sizes. Some of these are admirably executed. An ass's head (nature itself,) a *live* lobster, and a few more, particularly struck us among the motley assemblage; and it is curious to see how closely the natural colours of the animals are imitated in the variety of ancient marbles.

We observed here, as well as in several other parts of this Museum, the Sacrifice of Mithra, a deity, whose worship, according to Plutarch, was first introduced into Italy in the time of Pompey, but which did not obtain much in Rome until the reign of Caracalla. There can be no doubt that Mithra was originally, as the symbol of the Sun or Fire, the great God of the Persians; but after the time of Zoroaster, he was adored as the mediator between their Oromasdes and Arimanius,—their Principles of Good and Evil,—their God and their Devil. He appears here between the sun and the moon, pressing one knee on the back of a prostrate bull, whose neck he pierces with a dagger. But the ancient Persians admitted no image of their gods, no temples, no altars;* and all the sculptured representations we see of Mithra, are those of the Romans, who have accordingly invested him with the Phrygian cap and trowsers, which were the distinguishing signs they gave to all barbarians; that is, to all other nations except their own and the Greeks.

The serpent, dog, reptiles, and other mystic signs which surround Mithra, have been fully discussed in many learned treatises, to which, if curious, you may refer.†

From the Hall of the Animals we pass into another great saloon supported by columns of Giallo antico marble; at one end of which, wrapt in his pallium, and wielding his thunderbolts, sits Jupiter, who may in some sort be called the father of this Museum, as he was of the gods, for his was the first statue that was ever placed here.

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* Cicer. de Leg. lib. ii. cap. 26; Strab. lib. xv. p. 1064.

† Vandal de Antiq. quin. et marm. P. della Torra Monument. Vit. Aut. de Mithra. cap. i. &c.

At the other end, reclining in all the abandonment of grief, is the beautiful and sorrowing statue of the lost Cleopatra, perhaps the same which was made to grace the triumph of Augustus. By some it is supposed to represent Ariadne *Abbandonata*, but there seems to be too much of fulness in the figure, and of Asiatic voluptuousness—to accord with any thing but the Egyptian Queen; not to mention the serpent on the arm, or, as some will have it, the bracelet in the form of a serpent—though why should a bracelet have a form so strange? Why, contrary to all the rules of art, should such unmeaning ornaments be at all introduced into heroic sculpture? And why should it not be gilt, as when introduced into sculpture of any kind, they invariably were? It is particularly recorded, too, that Cleopatra was found, after her death, in the very attitude in which this statue is represented, with her right arm thrown back behind her head.* According to some writers, it represents the repose of Venus; to others, a sleeping Nymph. If it had been Venus, she would most probably have been unrobed; if a nymph, she would have had her urn. It has been also supposed to be Semele.

After Cleopatra, the famous seated statues of the two Greek poets—though the character of their countenances is, perhaps, rather that of philosophers,—are by far the finest in this noble hall. That of Menander is particularly beautiful.

Of the numerous statues it contains, the Shepherd Paris, in his Phrygian cap, seated on a rock, with the apple in his hand, as if considering to whom to give it,—a Roman lady, (christened Livia†,) whose noble figure N. Poussin delighted to study; a beautiful little Muse; a Diana; a basso relievo of Michael Angelo's, the only one of his I have ever seen, representing one of the Medici raising virtue and expelling vice; the bust of Nero, with the laurel crown he won at the Olympic games; the ad-

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* Vide Winkelman, Hist. de l'Art, liv. vi. cap. 6, who cites Galen. ad Pison. de Theriaca, tom. xiii. cap. 8, p. 341, Edit. Charter.

† Winkelman maintains that the head is modern.

mirable busts, supposed to be of Cato and Portia, with those of Julius Cæsar, Hadrian and the beautiful Antinous, are all that I can now remember to have seen in my hasty progress up and down this noble gallery.

In an adjoining room, the richness, beauty, and delicacy of which almost transport us into the fabled regions of enchantment, supported with columns and pilasters of transparent alabaster, adorned with ancient bassi relievi of exquisite sculpture, and floored with the bright pictured mosaics of imperial palaces, the imperishable colours of which seem reflected in the classic designs of the painted ceiling above—in this beautiful chamber are arranged, in marble niches, the famous Ganymede, perhaps the finest extant; the crouching Venus; the Faun of Hadrian's villa in *Rosso Antico*, with his sparkling eyes, his festive face, his pendent grapes, his basket, his pedum, and his goat; a beautiful Bacchante, full of Grecian grace; a Nymph of Diana bearing a torch; Adonis—but if I begin to particularize thus, we shall never get through the Vatican. This beautiful little apartment is called the *Stanza delle Maschere*, from the ancient masks which form the subject of the mosaic on the floor. The view from the balcony in front of the windows, is that which gave the name of *Belvidere* to this Museum, and in consequence, to the Apollo, and some of its finest pieces of sculpture.

It commands a prospect over the vale of the Tiber to the pine-covered height of Monte Mario; but the hues which the brilliant sky of Italy sheds over it, must be seen before its beauty can be imagined.

Our admiration was next called forth by the Hall of the Muses, who fill a temple worthy of themselves. The heavenly Sisters are ranged around, seemingly unconsciously lost in the blissful Paradise of Fancy, or touching their golden harps, or bursting into strains of unpremeditated eloquence; whilst Apollo *Musagetes*, or more properly *Cytharœdus*, dressed in the flowing robes he wears when he leads the sacred Nine, is striking the lyre in the wrapt ecstacy of inspiration. These invaluable statues were found in the Villa Adriana.

Between the figures of the Muses are appropriately

ranged the Grecian Termini of the ancient poets and philosophers—of Sophocles and Euripides; Socrates and Alcibiades. The fresco painting of the vaulted roof represents Apollo, with the Muses, and the Bards whom on earth they had inspired. All here is in unison with this Temple sacred to the Nine.

We passed on to a vast circular hall of still more striking magnificence, surrounded by busts and statues of colossal size and the most exquisite sculpture; among which, our eye, as it rapidly glanced around, was caught by the majestic form of the benignant Ceres—the warlike Juno Lanuvina, or Juno Sospita, in her goat-skin garb, her dart, her buckler, and her helmet, rushing to battle—and the same goddess, arrayed in her regal diadem, as Queen of Heaven. The beautiful statue of Hercules Commodus, (or Commodus as Hercules,) bearing in his arms the child he loved to play with; the imperial busts of Hadrian; the downcast pensive glance of his inseparable and idolized favourite, Antinous, the most beautiful of mortals; the majesty of Jupiter, the King of Heaven, and the dark and grisly head of Jupiter Serapis, the Monarch of Hell, once crowned with the sevenfold rays of the planets; the head of Ocean, entwined with grapes, as synonymous of plenty; together with many others, which I forbear to enumerate, attracted our attention.

In the centre, elevated above a beautiful ancient mosaic pavement—which encircles the colossal head of Medusa, and represents the combat of the Centaurs and the Lapithæ* stands a stupendous porphyry vase, which almost fills this immense hall with its vast circumference. It is of one piece, and measures forty-two feet round.

We entered the Hall of the Grecian Cross by magnificent gates of bronze, the doorway of which is sustained by two colossal Egyptian Caryatides† of granite, brought

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* Found in the ruins of Ocriculum, on the Tiber, about fifty miles from Rome.

† I am aware this term is improperly used here, though the error is so general, that it would, perhaps, seem like pedantry to avoid it. But Caryatides are, strictly speaking, the *female* bearers of entablatures only, and are supposed to have received their name from the captive women of Caria, whom, to perpetuate the memory of their conquest, the Athenians repre-

from the ruins of Hadrian's villa at Tivoli, and both supposed to represent Antinous under the figure of an Egyptian priest or Deity.

In this hall stands the immense porphyry Sarcophagi of the Empress Helena, the mother, and of Constantia, the daughter of Constantine the Great, who, being the first Christian princesses in the world, were of course canonized as saints, as their Pagan predecessors had been deified as goddesses.

The mosaic pavement in this hall, which represents masks and other grotesque designs, with a head of Minerva in the centre, was brought from the ruins of Tusculum, and is believed to have belonged to Cicero's Tusculan villa. You may conceive with what respect I gazed at the very figures on which his eyes must have rested, amidst the philosophic pursuits and domestic virtues of home, and with what veneration I set my foot on the spot where his must have so often trodden.

These brilliantly beautiful ancient pavements are all judiciously placed in the middle of these halls, and secured from injury by a light railing.

Between a double colonnade of Grecian marble and Oriental granite, we ascended a magnificent marble staircase, and from the top leaned over the bronze balustrade to look down upon the hall of the Grecian Cross, and through the folding doors into the Rotunda beyond it, where the figure of the colossal Ceres stood in majesty that awed us into redoubled admiration.

From hence we turned into a beautiful little circular hall called the *Stanza della Biga*, from the Biga, or Circus Car of richly sculptured marble which stands in the centre, drawn by two fiery steeds, not quite one of which is ancient and highly beautiful; the other is a tolerable copy. It is surrounded by ancient bass reliefs, some of which, on the sarcophagi of infants, represent the sports of the Circus in all their minutiæ, and with all the tragical accidents that so often attended them. The little Loves

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sented thus, as slaves supporting the capitals of the columns in their temples. Male figures, when so employed in architecture, were by the Greeks called Atlantes, by the Romans, Telamones.

that here act as charioteers, perched upon the horses, overthrown and crushed among the wheels, experience the real fate of too many of the competitors. A victorious Auriga, or Charioteer, (I believe unique,) with the palm of victory in his hand, and his tunic bound with a tenfold zone, stands among the statues in this beautiful little hall. There is a fine Discobolus, throwing the discus, certainly in a very singular attitude; but we need scarcely pretend, at this time of day, to dispute its accuracy, although some connoisseurs have attempted to prove it quite incorrect. The statues of the bearded, or Indian Bacchus; a Roman, with his head covered as if in the act of sacrificing; a Grecian, christened Phocion, (on mere supposition, as usual,) and a Gladiator, are all well worthy of notice.

From hence we proceeded through long galleries filled with statues, busts, bassi relievi, and sarcophagi; with beautiful candelabras, altars, and inscriptions; with immense ancient vases formed in the most classical shapes, of every variety of the rarest and most precious jaspers, marbles, and alabasters; (of very many of which, no other specimen is to be found in the world;) with Egyptian idols and Etruscan gods; and with every varied monument of ancient taste and magnificence, the description of which might fill volumes. We then traversed the long geographical gallery, the walls of which are covered with immense maps of the mountains, rivers, and plains of Italy, floating on a vast ocean of the deepest azure, and at length arrived at the chambers hung with tapestry woven in the looms of Flanders, and copied from the Cartoons of Raphael, which were painted for this purpose by order of Leo the Tenth, who considered this tapestry so valuable, that it was only allowed to be shown on particular saint's days. It would have said more for the taste of this great patron of the arts,* if he had taken

* The reputation of Leo X., as the great enlightened Patron of the Arts, seems indeed to have been cheaply earned; for what can be said for the taste and discernment of the man, who set no value on the Cartoons of Raphael, treated Leonardo da Vinci with neglect, despised the genius of Ariosto, and employed Michael Angelo, during his whole Pontificate, in working at a quarry!

better care of the precious originals. Of these, twelve of the largest size are nowhere to be found, nor is it known what became of them. Of the smaller ones, seven are happily preserved in England, the rest are irrecoverably lost. We may indeed gaze upon them in these tapestry copies, but it is little better than looking at a collection of beautiful plants in a Hortus Siccus. Still, however, they make the wonderful perfection of these grand compositions so apparent, that they awaken one's most poignant regret for the loss of such treasures of art as the originals must have been. I will just run through the tantalizing list of those which have perished.

First, there are *three*, representing the Massacre of the Innocents.

4. The Adoration of the Magi.
5. The Adoration of the Shepherds.
6. The Presentation of the Infant Jesus to the Temple.
7. The Resurrection of our Saviour, who is represented bursting out of the sepulchre, perhaps one of the grandest compositions in the world.
8. The Ascension of our Saviour.
9. The Supper in Emaus.
10. The Stoning of St. Stephen.
11. The Conversion of St. Paul.
12. The Holy Spirit descending on the Apostles assembled at supper with the three Marys.
13. Religion, Charity, and Justice, in the Heavens; and beneath, two Lions, and other symbolical representations of Leo X. and his virtues.

Even the tapestry copy of another, the Descent into Limbo, is destroyed; and one or two more, I understood, were hacked in pieces by the swords of the soldiers of Charles de Bourbon, at the sack of Rome. I never knew till now, that the Cartoons we possess, form so small a part of those which Raphael painted, nor ever heard the loss of the others mentioned. And I find it scarcely possible to convince the Roman cognoscenti, that we have not the originals of them all in England.

We were informed that these Tapestries were carried off by the French in 1798, and at last found in the possession of a Jew in Paris—who had already burnt two, and

was going to burn them all, for the sake of the gold and silver which enters largely into their fabrication ;—when they were redeemed from destruction by the present Pope.

The Tapestry Chambers terminate in the far-famed *Camere di Raffaello*, painted in fresco by himself, which form the extremity of the Vatican Museum. From the furthest of these rooms, a door leads out upon the upper story of the Arcades, or *Loggie di Raffaello*, and a staircase descends directly down to the court below. But the Chambers were closed ; the hour of admittance was over, and indeed the brightness of the day was past, so long had we lingered in the enchanted galleries of the Vatican. For want of another egress, therefore, we were obliged, not unwillingly, to retrace our way through them.

Besides the immense, and to those who have not seen it, the incredible extent of that part of this wonderful museum which we had already visited, the Vatican contains a Picture Gallery, consisting of a long suite of rooms, filled with the masterpieces of painting—the *Camere* and *Loggie* of Raphael, painted in fresco by himself and his pupils—the Sistina and Paolina Chapels, painted in fresco by Buonarotti ; a set of chambers filled with sculpture, not generally open to the public, but willingly shown at the request of individuals—and the Library, the halls and galleries of which alone are more than thirteen hundred feet in length !

As if this was not enough, another gallery is building for the statuary, which, for want of room, is at present piled up in the *magazine* of the Vatican. Of the sculptures there, the finest is the Statue of the Nile.

After what I have seen, I have no hesitation in believing the assertion of a very accurate and intelligent Italian friend of ours, that you cannot see the Vatican Museum without walking a mile and three quarters ! It is not that it would actually measure this in extent (though the Museum of Statues alone is computed to be a mile,) but to see the whole, including statues, paintings, libraries, chambers, and chapels, you must pass twice through the Picture Gallery and the Library, as well as several other apartments, so that I believe the complete tour will be more rather than less.

We had only walked through the Gallery of Statues, for we did not seem to have lingered any where, and yet we had spent the whole morning in our progress ; we had, however, reached its extremity, and we had not yet seen what I came there solely to see—the Apollo Belvidere, and the Laocoon.

The omission was intentional. Our guide thought (and perhaps with reason,) that if we saw them first, we should look at nothing afterwards, and now pretended that they could not be seen at this hour, and that he must defer showing them to us till another day ; to which, reluctantly, and with secret discontent, we were compelled to agree. In returning, we paused a moment in the court, and, by the murmuring fountain which had charmed me so much —a door was suddenly thrown open, and I beheld, standing in solitary majesty, the Apollo !

Never, never was there revealed to the dreams of gifted genius a vision of such celestial, such soul-beaming beauty! The god of light, and poesy, and imagination, stands confessed to our dazzled senses ; and well does he stand here, where every thing seems to breathe and burn with his essence, where all around is his creation, and every tributary form bows to him ! He is no inhabitant of the earth, though he deigns to tread it. His home is in the heavens. He looks, he moves, he breathes a god. Divinity is stamped on his brow ; godlike majesty beams from his front. Those "hyperion curls" cluster round a brow formed to command. Milton seems to have had in view his divine form, in his description of our First Parent—

> "His fair large front, and eye sublime, declared
> Absolute rule ; and hyacinthine locks
> Round from his parted forelock manly hung
> Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad."

His is not merely the rude power of physical strength, that nerves the muscles and swells the limbs of a Hercules ; it is the *might of mind* which raises him above brute force, and makes us feel that "a God, a visible God," is before us, and that his triumph is secure ; for vainly would a mortal presume to contend with him.

He does not bend on us that serene eye. Some object more distant, but beneath him, for a moment attracts his regard. Some feeling of transient indignation and disdain swells his nostrils, and slightly curls his full upper lip. Yet, dignified and unperturbed, conscious of his power and undoubting his success, he gives one proud glance to see the reptile he scorns perish by his dart, and scarcely pauses in his majestic course. That the Deity has just deigned to slay the Pythian serpent, is, I think, so evident in the whole air, action, and expression of "the heavenly archer," that I am astonished there can be any doubt of it.*

The left hand and arm have been most clumsily restored by some bungling sculptor.† The right arm, and the foot ‡ and ankle, which were fractured, are ancient; but they have been so badly repaired, that every thing possible has been done to injure it, but in vain. That it is the finest statue in the world, I feel better than all the canons of criticism can prove it. Vain, indeed, is here the cold language of critics and connoisseurs. The heart and mind feel its power, and are penetrated with its transcendent beauty. The Venus di Medicis is beautiful; but hers is mere mortal beauty. How far removed from the unapproachable perfection of the heavenly Apollo!

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* The serpent on the trunk of the tree by his side, the only way in which Python could be introduced, because he kills him from afar, has led some to imagine that Apollo appears here as the God of Medicine, and that he has caused some pestilence to cease. In this case he would not have been represented as having just thrown one of his darts, for they had the power of causing, not of curing plagues. But if any one can look at this inimitable statue, and form such a supposition, reasoning must indeed be vain.

Then it has been represented that the employment of slaying a serpent is beneath the majesty of the god; but let us recollect it was a monster that had spread desolation through "his own regions," and that, armed with power from the gods to destroy, was invincible by human force; nor is there the slightest exertion, the slightest deviation from the dignity of the godhead in the deed.

We know that his victory over the monster Python was considered of so much importance, that the town of Delphi in consequence took the name, and that the Pythian Games were celebrated in commemoration of it ever afterwards.

† Giovanangelo Montorsoli.

‡ It is a curious circumstance, that both in the Apollo and the Laocoon the feet are of unequal length. It is done to aid the perspective.

How often, while I gazed upon it in silent and unutterable admiration, did it seem to be instinct with spirit and with life! How often did I feel this form was indeed the habitation of a deity! And is it the creation of man? Did he call it forth in its beauty, and endow it with eternal youth, to dwell in the light of immortality on earth? Was a being so infinitely superior, formed and fashioned by his hand? It is *ideal beauty* revealed to our senses; and it is perhaps the sole instance that man is indeed capable of personifying the image of that sublime perfection which is formed within his soul. Can the mind revert to the period when this shapeless block of marble was hewn from the quarry, without amazement—without almost being tempted to think that the being that formed it, and impressed upon it those attributes, must have been endowed with more than mortal powers? I could gaze upon it for ever with undiminished admiration; and like the Athenian, who thought him unfortunate that had not seen the Jupiter Olympias of Phidias, I pity the man who has not beheld the Apollo Belvidere.

Description would be the excess of absurdity; even the best copies are vain. No cast, drawing, or design, that I ever beheld, had conveyed to my mind the faintest image of its perfection. From every attempt to imprison it in other moulds, the subtle essence of beauty escapes. The Divinity disdains to inhabit a meaner form.

You will think me mad—but if I were, I am not the first person who has gone mad about the Apollo. Another, and a far more unfortunate damsel, a native of France, it is related, at the sight of this matchless statue, lost at once her heart and her reason. Day after day, and hour after hour, the fair enthusiast gazed and wept, and sighed her soul away, till she became, like the marble, pale, but not like the marble, cold. Nor, like the lost Eloisa, nor the idol of her love, could she "forget herself to stone," till death at last closed the ill-fated passion, and the life of "the maid of France."

But English maids don't die of love—neither for men nor statues—therefore I hope to live to admire the Apollo.

LETTER XII.

THE VATICAN.

I MADE it my particular request yesterday not to be shown the Laocoon; I could bear no more. My mind and soul were full. I could think and speak of nothing but the Apollo; and, through the whole of the remainder of the day, nay, even in the visions of the night, that noblest creation of human art returned upon me, bright in immortal youth, and resplendent in beauty. This morning, we returned to the Vatican, and again and again I gazed with undiminished admiration upon this matchless statue.

It was found near Antium, in the ruins of a Roman villa, supposed to have originally belonged to Nero, for it was his favourite retreat, as well as his birth-place.*

The name of its great author is unknown. His memory has passed from the earth, and oblivion equally involves the period in which he lived, and the date of the work. From its excellence, it was originally inscribed by Winkelman, and all the critics of his day, to the great meridian of sculpture, the age of Alexander the Great; but, strange to say, it is now universally recognised to be of *Italian* marble; so that, though beyond all question the work of some great Grecian artist, it must have been executed in Italy, and cannot, therefore, be of more ancient date than the empire; for, during the republic, the taste for the fine arts was not sufficiently disseminated, nor the wealth and patronage of private individuals sufficiently powerful, to allure the finished sculptors of Greece to Rome. By some critics, this unrivalled statue is attributed to the reign

* TACITUS, Ann. lib. xv. cap. 23. lib. xiv. cap. 4.

of Hadrian; by others, to that of Nero; by many, it is supposed to be a fine copy from some great masterpiece of the Alexandrian age, and, from the peculiarly thin folds of the chlamys,* the original has been conjectured to have been a bronze statue.

I remember, Pliny describes a famous bronze statue of Apollo killing a serpent with his darts, the work of Pythagoras; and it strikes me as not improbable, that the Apollo Belvidere may be a copy, made perhaps in the age of Nero, from that great masterpiece of Grecian sculpture. But vain are now all our speculations. All that we can, or need ever know of this admirable statue, is, that it is supremely beautiful; and if it be a copy, we have scarcely a wish for the original.

In a similar alcove of this court, we were shown the Perseus, and the two Pugilists of Canova, the only modern statues which have been admitted into the Museum of the Vatican.

To turn from the contemplation of the Apollo to look on any other sculpture, ancient or modern, is exposing it to a fearful test; and the Perseus unfortunately recalls to us, with peculiar force, the image of that inimitable work. At the first glance the resemblance strikes us, and we see that it was in the mind of the artist when he conceived his own. Unconsciously, perhaps, the idea predominated; yet as it was destined to replace the Apollo, when carried off, as it was believed, for ever, by the French, Canova might wish to recall it to those who could see it no more. The Perseus is undeniably beautiful—but is it not the mere beauty of form and feature? He is strikingly graceful—but is it not the grace taught by art? His air and attitude, his very tread, have something in them studied, and of stage effect, remote from the truth and freedom of nature. He looks more like a being representing a part, than actually doing the deed—more like an actor of Perseus, than Perseus himself. It has been said, too, that

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* A short Grecian mantle, the only drapery ever used in the heroic style of sculpture, in which heroes and Gods are represented. Excepting this, they are invariably nude.

the position is out of nature;—that no man could stand as Perseus is standing.

It has been censured, and not perhaps altogether without justice, as effeminate; it is in feminine beauty that Canova excels, and its character, rather than that of the hero, he has impressed upon this work. It is, indeed, a being too soft and refined for a man, much less for a warrior, yet it does not bear the character of a god. The head is fine, and its expression, as well as that of the Medusa's head, have been deservedly admired. The arms and the contour of the limbs are beautiful—perhaps too delicately beautiful. But with all its faults, (and comparing it, as one cannot help doing, with the standard of the Apollo, is it wonderful we should see all these, and more?) the Perseus is an honour to modern statuary, and worthy of the genius of its distinguished artist.

To judge of the Pugilists, it is necessary to take along with you the story. Creugas—you must really excuse me if I always take it for granted you are quite as ignorant as myself, and never having heard of such a person till I saw him personified here, I conclude you may be in the same predicament,—Creugas, a celebrated Pugilist, in an evil hour, agreed to abide, in an unguarded posture, the onset of his antagonist, Damossenus, who is here represented in the act of aiming the fatal blow on the stomach, which laid his rival lifeless at his feet.* The figure of the assailant is evidently that which is the favourite with the sculptor.

Respecting the merits of the Pugilists, there will be many opinions. I can conceive, that, while some think them little inferior to the Wrestlers, the Gladiators, and the Herculeses of ancient art, others will discern in them only false anatomy, erroneous conception, vulgarity, bad taste, and hyperbolical exaggeration of attitude and expression—that while their admirers only see the perfection of vigour and energy, their contemners will find in them a new proof how narrow is the line that divides sublimity from bombast, and force of expression from caricature.

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* The story is in PAUSANIAS.

In another *Gabinetto* of this court stands the much disputed—but indisputably beautiful figure, that has been successively termed the Antinous, the Meleager, and the Mercury, of unrivalled excellence. It originally received the first of these names from its downward glance, which gives an air of resemblance to the beautiful Grecian. But so striking is the head and bust of Antinous, that, had it been intended for him, we should not have had room to doubt. By Winkelman, it was pronounced a Meleager —though destitute of every distinguished mark—from the real or fancied resemblance it bears to the undoubted statue of the successful hunter of Calydon.

By the critics and connoisseurs, and what is far more important—the great sculptors of the present day—it is thought to bear the physiognomy and character of Mercury. The arm which is broken off may, from its position, have held the caduceus. The want of wings is no objection, for it was only when represented as the messenger of the gods, that he was necessarily "feathered." He stands here as the God of Arts, the inspirer of Genius.*

Far be it from me to set my opinion in opposition to those of Canova and Thorwaldsen; but I own this beautiful statue does not strike me as bearing the attributes of a god. I should recognise in it the perfection of youth, of manly mortal beauty and strength.

In this, as in every other great work of the Grecian school, its charm does not consist merely in the corporeal beauty—in the symmetry of conformation; it is, that we feel this form is inhabited by a soul capable of all that can exalt and dignify our nature, and allied to heavenly things. It is the ideal beauty that we worship. The exquisite form and expression of the head and countenance—the broad and swelling chest—the air of conscious youth that breathes around it—the unstudied grace, and the latent powers of soul that it exhibits are

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* Yet in the beautiful bronze statue at Naples, of Mercury sitting, which bears the same meditative sedate character, if I remember right the feet are winged.

beyond all praise. The upper part of the statue is faultless; but the legs are clumsy and ill-shaped. It is generally supposed to be a work of the age of Hadrian, but indisputably of Grecian art. It is also of Grecian marble. It was found on the Esquiline Hill, near the church of *S. S. Martino e Sylvestro*, which stands on a part of the Baths of Titus. If it formed one of their ornaments, it was probably of more ancient date than the reign of Hadrian; but it may have stood in some one of the many great houses of the Roman patricians, which were situated on this hill.*

In the last compartment of the same court stands the Laocoon.

If in the Apollo we see the fulness of manly grace, and more than mortal beauty—if the serenity of the godhead shines on his commanding brow, in the Laocoon we behold a being of our own nature struggling before us in the heart-rending anguish of parental affection, and the convulsive agonies of an instantaneously impending unnatural death.

The blood curdles at that dreadful tragedy. On that hoary head sits horror, in her deepest, darkest, deadliest, sublimity. We behold the father in that last, bitterest moment of high-wrought agony, when he hears the faint cry of his helpless offspring, who vainly cling to him for protection—sees them entwined with himself in the inextricable rings of these horrid reptiles, from whose touch nature recoils, and shrinks in agony of spirit from their opening fangs—terror and corporeal anguish mingling with the pangs of parental love and the tortures of despair! The distorted face—the rolling eye—the ghastly countenance—the bristling hair—the racked and working muscles—the starting sinews and distended limbs of Laocoon, give us the picture of human nature in its last stage of horror and of suffering; and that it *is* human nature, our deep-shuddering sympathy makes us feel too well. Can it be marble that thus expresses the deep and complicated passions of the soul, and harrows up all the feelings of our nature?

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* *Vide* MARTIAL, PLINY'S Letters, &c.

To the unspeakable sublimity of the figure of the Laocoon himself, every tongue does homage; in its perfection, keen-eyed criticism has never espied a fault. But it is generally, and truly said, that the children are not formed like nature. They are diminutive men. This is true; but they ought not to be considered apart from the main figure—they are subordinate objects in the group. Look on them, not separately or individually, but as a whole. Your eye, your soul, your sympathy is with the Laocoon himself. And see how they group with him? Would the chubby-faced undefined forms, and inexpressive features of childhood, have harmonized with that agonized form? No, the great artist here wisely sacrificed truth of detail to general effect.

But although to metamorphose them into infancy would utterly spoil the group, we must acknowledge that, if their conception be fine, their execution is far inferior to that of the Laocoon himself; so far indeed, that it has been doubted whether they are the work of the same artist; and one of the first of critics* gives it as his opinion, that of the sculptors† whom Pliny mentions as being the authors of this unrivalled work, the figure of the Laocoon was executed by Agesander the Rhodian, and the children by Athenodorus and Polidorus, who are believed to have been his sons. It is now evident that the children have been executed separately, and joined to the principal figure, though it was done with such nicety, that in Pliny's time they seemed to be all formed of one block, (*ex uno lapide eum et liberos.*)

It adds, if possible, to the inexpressible interest with which we regard this wonderful masterpiece, which sculpture has never equalled, to know, that during all the ages that have passed since it was formed, the poets, the philosophers, and the princes, whose genius and virtues have blessed and enlightened the world, have gazed upon it with the same admiration we now feel—that Titus and

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* *Vide* WINKELMAN, lib. vi. cap. 3—10.

† Fuere summi artifices Agesander et Polidorus et Athenodorus Rodii. PLINY, lib. xxxiv. cap. 8.

Trajan* have admired it—that Pliny has praised it—and Virgil himself must have beheld it; for so close is the resemblance between the description in the Æneid and the statue, that it is certain the poet must either have copied the sculptor, or the sculptor realized the conception of the poet. And as the great artists who sculptured the Laocoon lived about the age of Alexander the Great, we must conclude that Virgil, and consequently that Augustus, Horace, and Macænas, must have beheld and admired its matchless sublimity. Three thousand years have passed away since it was formed, and still it stands in unchanged, undiminished grandeur. It has been the admiration of every successive generation, that the hand of Time has swept into the common tomb; and, while the world remains, it will be the wonder and the praise of the generations yet to come!

Incomprehensible power of Genius that workest thy own immortality!—That in thy sublime aspirations after perfection, seemest to divest thyself of the trammels of matter, to soar even into the heavens, to behold revealed the blissful creations of fancy, the purer worlds of beauty and of truth, and to bring down upon earth the fair forms of light and love that dwell in brightness there—O thou! wonderously endowed with that deep powerful glance of intuitive perception, which alone penetrates the hidden mysteries of nature—searches out the dark

* It was found in the Baths, or rather the Palace of Titus, on the very spot where it is described by Pliny to have stood, and where it must have often been seen by Trajan, who enlarged and frequented them. One arm of the Laocoon (the right) was wanting; but it has been so ably restored, though only in plaster, that the deficiency is scarcely a blemish. Though it is not certain what modern artist had the merit of this restoration, yet, as it is known that Michael Angelo was charged with its execution, and as it is in the memory of some old Italians, that the marble arm he had destined for it, but left unfinished in a fit of despair, was lying on the ground at the foot of the statue, it is most probable that the arm it now bears was his plaster model. It is too good at least to be the work of a very different *Angelo, Giovanangelo,* (the same who restored the left arm of the Apollo,) to whom, probably from the similarity of the names, it has been sometimes attributed. It has likewise been of late ascribed to Bernini; but it is unfortunate for his claim to it, that it was executed fifty years before he was born. The two broken arms of the children have been wretchedly restored. Possibly *they* may have been done by *Giovanangelo.*

passions of the soul, unfolds the secrets of our being, and brings to view the unfathomed horrors of death and of despair—What art thou, and whither dost thou tend? Light of the world! whose living fires stream with unquenchable beams through the long course of departed or of coming time, illuminating the darkness of past ages, and tinging the future with glory and promise—by whose mysterious force we are elevated to rapture, or transfixed with horror—we know thy immortality—we acknowledge thy influence—we feel thy power!

You will, I know, think me distracted, and expect, of course, that my next letter will be dated from Bedlam; or, as I am not at present exactly in its neighbourhood, from the *Ospedale de' Pazzi*, the asylum for the unfortunate lunatics who lose their wits at Rome. People, however, cannot well lose what they never possessed; and for this reason, perhaps, my good friend, I have not lost mine here.

LETTER XIII.

THE WALLS AND GATES OF ROME.

I FIND myself wholly unable to attend to any thing modern at Rome, before I have seen all that is ancient; and, far from jumbling together ruins, churches, palaces, pictures, statues, and museums, in one wide chaos of confusion, as I see others do; I find the antiquities by themselves more than sufficient to employ my undivided attention; so that, having satisfied the first cravings of curiosity, by seeing every thing in the usual heterogeneous sort of pell-mell manner, I have resolved to visit the remains of Ancient Rome, in her hills, her forums, her temples, her baths, her theatres, her tombs, and her aqueducts, in distinct succession, without regard to their local situation, in order to form as clear an idea of what they once were, as the obscurity in which they are now involved will admit.

But no small difficulty attends this research; for every stranger must still feel the truth of Petrarch's observation, that "Rome is no where so little known as in Rome."

First, however, let us look back for a moment on the gradual growth of Rome from the beginning,—see the succession in which the Seven Hills were added to the city, and, at the same time, trace the extension of the walls, their changes, and their decay.

With what sort of fence Romulus encircled the Palatine, or what fortifications he erected on the Capitol to shelter his infant Rome, it would now be vain to inquire, if it were interesting to know. We only learn, that having with his own hand drawn a furrow round the Palatine, he confined the city within the bounds of the hill, and guarded it with a wall, mound, or enclosure of some sort. He also raised a distinct fortress on the Capitol Hill, (then called Saturnius) where he instituted his famous asylum for outlaws. The Romans lived with him on the Palatine; and after their union with the Sabines, the latter, with their King Tatius, inhabited the Capitol; and these two hills, with the intervening Forum, formed the city of Numa.

By Numa, however, the Temple of the deified Romulus, under the warlike title of Quirinus, was erected on the Quirinal Hill, to which it gave the name; and it would appear that Numa had a house,* and, as some assert, even another Capitol there, though this is neither supported by much probability or evidence.

After his death, the city was enlarged by Tullus Hostilius, who, after razing Alba to the ground, transported its inhabitants to Rome, and assigned Mount Cœlius for their residence. To give it dignity, he built himself a palace there, which he continued to inhabit during his life.

The Aventine Mount was annexed to Rome by Ancus Martius, who peopled it with the inhabitants of Politorium, Tellana and Ficana, small towns (perhaps villages) of Latium, which he had conquered. At this period, several thousands of Latins came to Rome, where they dwelt both on the Aventine, and in the valley between its southern

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* Vide Plutarch—Life of Numa.

height and the Palatine, on the confines of the Circus Maximus.

Although Mons Janiculus was not then inhabited, and never was counted as one of the Seven Hills, or considered an integral part of Rome, Ancus Martius surrounded it with a wall, and erected upon it a fort, lest it should fall into the possession of an enemy. He also connected it with the city by throwing across the Tiber a bridge called the *Pons Sublicius*, from being of wood, which was the first, and, for a long time, the only bridge of Rome.

Tarquinius Priscus began to enclose the city, which then contained four hills, the Palatine, the Capitol, the Cœlian, and the Aventine, with a stone wall; and though a war with some of the Sabine nations (or rather towns) interrupted his work, it appears that he lived to finish it.*

What became of this wall we know not, for we hear no more of it; but we are told that his successor, Servius Tullius, having added to Rome the Quirinal, Viminal, and Esquiline Hills, and established his own palace upon the latter, encircled the whole of the city with a solid wall, thirteen miles in circumference,† built of large squares of peperin stone. This enclosure must undoubtedly have comprised not merely the city itself, but also sufficient land to support its inhabitants, and guard their flocks from the predatory incursions of the hostile tribes of Latium. Servius Tullius fortified this wall on the eastern side, behind the Viminal hill, where it was weakest, by an *Agger*, a high mound or rampart of earth thrown up, with a ditch on each side, a little without the wall.

Tarquinius Superbus raised another Agger near the former, but rather farther to the south. Antiquaries still point out some vestiges of the Agger of Servius Tullius, behind the Baths of Dioclesian, between the Porta Pia and the Circus of Sallust; and Nardini says, undoubted remains of the Agger of Tarquin are still to be seen between the Porta Maggiore and the Church of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, in the vineyard adjoining that church,

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* Vide Livy, lib. i. c. 44. † Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. iii. c. 5.

which is within the present walls of the city, though without the line of the Tullian wall. Ancus Martius also fortified it with the *Fossa Quiritium*.

The *Aggeres* were for defence, and raised only in one part; the *Pomœrium* was for sanctity, and extended all around the wall on both sides. The Pomœrium seems to have been a circle of ground consecrated by the Augurs, and held sacred—by which is meant useless—for it was unlawful to apply it to any purpose, either of cultivation or habitation.

Although, originally, the Pomœrium was undoubtedly the consecrated circle described by the plough, at the formation of a city, on which the walls were built, it appears that it was not necessarily preserved close to them, but could be removed to a distance. We hear that it was frequently enlarged, without any change being made in the walls themselves. Yet it could only be extended by those who had extended the limits of the empire; nor could it be done at all without the consent of the college of Augurs. It was extended by Sylla,* Cæsar,* and Augustus;† and probably by Claudius,‡ by Nero, and by Trajan. The *Pomœrium* (not the wall) was the nominal boundary of the city; every building within it was considered within Rome.

The suburbs beyond it, on every side, were no doubt extensive; but the accounts given by some writers, who make them reach to Ocriculum on the north, a distance of fifty miles, and in the same proportion in other directions, are incredible, and inconsistent with known facts.

The ancients indeed say, that the *villas* of the Roman citizens extended to this distance—just as the country houses of English gentlemen may be seen by the road side fifty miles from London—but that by no means implies that the suburbs of the city reached so far. Indeed, the still-existing ruins of various small Roman Fora, or market towns, only four or five miles distant from the walls of Rome, sufficiently contradict that wild idea; and the tombs which still line the great roads, prove that the

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* A. Gell. lib. xiii. c. 14.
† Tacit. Ann. lib. xii. c. 23.
‡ Tacit. Ann. lib. xii. c. 24.

tenements of the dead left little room for those of the living.

Numerous passages from the ancient historians and classics might be quoted to prove that the suburbs of the city, strictly speaking, did not even extend to the Milvian Bridge, but it would only be an unnecessary display of erudition.

I do not find that the integrity of this royal wall of Servius Tullius was materially disturbed till the time of Aurelian, who in the course of his short but active reign, built a new wall round Rome, enlarging it very considerably, so as to comprehend the Janiculum, and the Pincian Hill, with great part of the Campus Martius.

The walls of Aurelian, if we may credit the exaggerated description of more than one ancient writer,* were fifty miles in extent. According to other, and more probable accounts, they were only twenty-one.† It is indeed difficult to believe that if they had really comprised that immense circuit, not one vestige of them should now be discernible—not one stone remain of all that mighty mass, to mark where they had stood; and still more wonderful that no record should exist of a destruction so complete. During the disastrous years of barbarian invasion and domestic contest, which followed the last short reigns of glory, we may indeed easily believe, that they were shattered and even partially destroyed; but that they were ever wholly razed to the ground, we have not the smallest reason to conclude.

Yet some antiquaries of the present day, upon the sole authority of an inscription at the Porta Maggiore, and the blocked-up gate, which adjoined the Porta Portese,‡ maintain, that the walls of Aurelian were totally destroyed, and that the walls we now see are entirely the erec-

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* Hist. Aug. p. 222, Vossius, &c.

† Roma Antica Nardini, lib. i. c. 8.

‡ Both are reported by Nardini, and are to the same effect. I select that of the Porta Portese, because no longer extant. The old gate, which was double, and an extremely curious specimen of that singular mode of building, was removed by Urban the Eighth; and the present gate, which is entirely modern, was built in a different situation, by Innocent the Tenth. The inscription of Honorius is as follows:—

tion of Honorius, patched up and eked out by the Popes. But how is it possible to believe, that in that single century, which alone intervened from the finished erection of Aurelian's walls* to the days of Honorius, they could have been levelled with the ground, and their entire demolition, and their entire reconstruction, unrecorded in the annals of history! Besides, we know that the walls of Aurelian were standing only a few years before this date of their alleged reconstruction; because history informs us, that, at the menacing approach of Attila, "the Roman citizens laboured to repair the walls, to repel the barbarian;"† so that it is quite certain, that, if Honorius did rebuild the walls, he must first have pulled them down. But we have only his own word for it; and it is rather more probable, that, in these pompous inscriptions, Honorius, like some other princes, laid claim to more than he deserved;—that he repaired. not rebuilt them; for the walls themselves to this day contradict him, and bear intrinsic evidence, from the remains of high antiquity preserved in them, that they are not entirely the work of his age.

We may, however, allow him the honour he claims, of having been the first to flank them with the Gothic towers, which still appear at regular intervals; though even these, as they stand at present, are in great part the work of later times.

S. P. Q. R.

IMPP. CAESS. DD. NN. INVICTISS. PRINCIPIB. ARCADIO ET HONORIO VICTORIB. ET TRIVMPHATOR. SEMPER AVGG. OB INSTAVR. VRB. AETERNAE MVROS PORTAS ET TVRRES EGEST. IMMENS. RVDERIB. EX. SUGGEST. V. C. ET ILLVST. COMIT., ET MAGIST. VTRIVSQ. MILIT. STILICONIS AD PERPETVIT. NOMIN. EORVM SIMVLACRA CONST. CVRANTE FL. MACROBIO LONGINIANO V. C. PRAEF. VRB. D. N. M. Q. EORVM.

* They were not finished till the reign of Probus.

† Decline and Fall, vol. v. p. 187. It was during the panic occasioned by this invasion of Alaric, that the Roman legion stationed to guard the wall of Britain against the Caledonians was hastily recalled; though, as Gibbon observes, even with the most rapid march they could have made from Edinburgh or Newcastle to Rome, their succour must have been somewhat tardy.

It is indeed certain, that but little of the original structure of Aurelian's walls can now remain. One-third of the walls of Rome were destroyed by Totila, about the middle of the sixth century ;* after this, they were "hastily restored with rude and dissimilar materials by Belisarius,"† to stand the second siege ; and, subsequently, they have been besieged, shattered, taken and retaken, repaired, patched, and even enlarged, by the Popes. Nearly as late as the middle of the ninth century, the *Città Leonina* in Trastevere, which includes the Vatican Mount, was walled in by Pope Leo Fourth.

With all these changes and additions, the walls are now computed to form a circuit of about fourteen miles, and comprise an immense extent of unpeopled land. The stranger may wander for hours and miles within the walls of this great capital, in solitude and silence as unbroken as if he were in a desert. He will pass along untrodden roads, and by abandoned habitations ; he will see no life within their gates ; no human being will greet him, and no voice will answer to his call. Over a wide extent of Rome to the south, her hills are desolate. On the north, and in the plain of the Campus Martius alone, there is life and motion.

Nothing can be more heterogeneous than the composition of the present walls, which bound this half peopled, half-lifeless space. In the haste with which parts of the structure were made or repaired, every thing most precious and most vile was used as materials. Entire marble statutes have actually been extracted from the very heart of the wall, which probably may contain many more. A very respectable Minerva, now in the Museum of the Capitol, was released by mere chance from her long imprisonment, and some valuable bass-reliefs, which served the purposes of bricks, have also been rescued from a similar situation.

But marble and rubble, porphyry and plaster, are all jumbled together ; kings, emperors, barbarians, Goths, and popes, have succeeded each other, and alternately

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* A. D. 546. † Decline and Fall, vol. vii. p. 352.

demolished or restored ; but that the walls have never been completely destroyed or rebuilt since the time of Aurelian, who incorporated in his extended circle every building that chanced to stand in his way, is evident from the strange medley of fragments of all kinds and ages, that may still be traced within their bounds. The most remarkable of these are the remains of the *Amphitheatrum Castrense*, the *Prætorian Camp*, and the *Muro Torto.*

Besides these curious vestiges of antiquity, which must all be classed as works of the empire, the antiquaries seem to agree, that the present wall, in some places, is built upon the site of that of Servius Tullius, and even contains within its circle some remains of that ancient erection; but though every body said such things were to be seen, nobody could point them out to us. We were not easily discouraged, however, and accordingly set out to make the discovery ourselves. You would have laughed if you could have seen us issuing out at the Porta San Giovanni, in an open carriage, though the weather was extremely cold, and driving round the outside of the walls at a foot pace, investigating them all the way with eager eyes and outstretched necks, in the hope of seeing some small remnant of the Tullian wall. Nardini* says, that remains of it are to be seen between the Porta San Giovanni and San Paola, and also between the Amphitheatrum Castrense and the Castra Prætoria, and that they consist of "*alcune pietre quadrate, rozzamente frapposte a mattoni.*" If this be all, we certainly saw them to-day ; but there is no great delight in looking at "a few pieces of square stone rudely built up among bricks." As the Tullian wall was built of square blocks of peperin stone, indeed, few people would be hardy enough to assert, either that these square stones, now separated from each other by the interpolated bricks, did or did not once belong to it ; but that no considerable part of the erection of Servius Tullius now remains, may be safely affirmed.

In the course of our dead march round the walls, we stopped at the gate of the Villa Borghese, to examine that

* Roma Antica.

huge mis-shapen mass, called the *Muro Torto*, which nods over one's head, and the bulged uncouth and distorted form of which is a curious contrast to the beauty of the reticulated building of which it is constructed. This *opus reticulatum* was not much known till the last age of the Republic, and was little used after the time of Hadrian, and never after that of Caracalla. From the style, this building is pronounced by the best judges to be a work of the early period of the empire. It has obviously been incorporated in the walls, because it stood in their line. It has been called the tomb of the Domitian family, in which Nero was buried, and which certainly stood where this does, exactly on the top of the Pincian Hill;* but this opinion, I know not why, has been exploded; and it is now supposed, with perhaps as little reason, to have belonged to some of the Roman villas that covered this mount. Procopius says, that Belisarius, fearing it would fall, wanted to rebuild it, but that the people of Rome prevented him, assuring him St. Peter himself had promised to undertake its defence; and so punctually has the saint kept his word, that it still nods over the passenger's head to this day.

Vainly have the antiquaries puzzled themselves to conceive, with what intention, or by whom this piece of deformity was made; whether originally built in this strange shape, or whether fallen into it by time or accident. It is called the *Muro Torto*, and that is all that they, or I, can tell you about it.

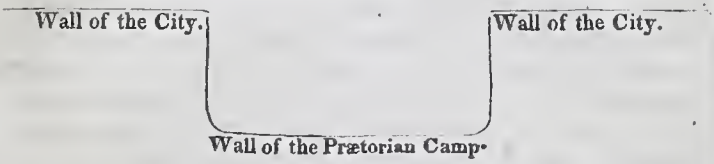
Between this Muro Torto and the Porto Salara, we passed the Porta Pinciana, now shut up; at the base of which an ingenious friend of ours pointed out a block of marble lying on the ground, with this inscription, "*Date obolum Belisario.*" This singular circumstance may seem to give support to the popular tale of his blindness and mendicity; but history expressly states, that he died at Constantinople a few months after his liberation from imprisonment; it therefore leaves us no possibility of imagining that Belisarius returned to Italy at all after his disgrace, much less that he ever sat at the gates of the city he had conquered and saved, to beg a halfpenny. Must

* Suetonius in Vit. Ner.

we then think that this inscription belonged to the pedestal of some statue of Belisarius? Or suppose it forged to support the monkish legend, that the blind old general roved through the world a mendicant?

Between the Porta Pia and the Porta San Lorenzo, we passed along a part of the ancient Prætorian Camp; the barracks or quarter of the Prætorian guards, built by Tiberius without the gates, but one side of which was included, most probably by Honorius,* in the present extended wall of the city.

The ancient form of the Prætorian Camp has been an oblong square with the corners rounded off; and the length of the wall and the curves at each end, still remain thus,



It is patched up in many places; but a practised eye may easily trace the fine bricks and beautiful masonry of Tiberius, from the mean construction of a lower age. It is marked all along by a little cornice of brick, about eleven feet from the ground; but the ancient wall of the castra seems to reach several feet higher.

The three towers which surmount this part of the wall, are, of course, of the time of Honorius, Belisarius, or some other Goth.

According to Tacitus, the Prætorian Camp must have been near the Viminal Hill, and near the Via Nomentana,† which exactly answers to the spot where we find it. Suetonius, too, in his account of the death of Nero,‡ affords additional confirmation of its local situation. An inscription found here on a leaden pipe, (reported by Ve-

* It is certain that it could not have been taken in by Aurelian, as some writers pretend, because the Castra Prætoria was not destroyed till the time of Constantine.

† Tacit. Ann. lib. xv. ‡ Vide Suetonius, 48.

nuti,) would alone have established the fact; and the ancient wall itself is the most indisputable evidence of all.

From the remains of the Prætorian Camp we proceeded to the remains of the *Amphitheatrum Castrense*, which now forms part of the walls of the city, though when included in them seems somewhat doubtful. The date of the building itself is also uncertain. It is only known, that it was the work of the empire, destined for the amusement of the Prætorian guards, who hardened their savage nature by the bloody sports of the amphitheatre.

Excavations have been diligently made in every part of the arena, and a great quantity of large bones were found, which, as a learned antiquary observed to me with becoming solemnity, "may be conjectured to have belonged to the wild beasts that were slaughtered in it;" and as his conjecture did not seem to me to be too bold, I cordially agreed with him. In this harmonious mood, we stopped to view the exterior of this military amphitheatre.

Its remains consist of a brick semicircle, adorned with Corinthian brick pilasters; and to me it seemed mean and ugly. But this is only a proof of my want of taste; for the antiquary pronounced it to be a work "*di bello gusto*," and was eloquent in its praise. This wall and pilasters of brick may be beautiful, though I could not discover it; but they are all that are to be seen outside, and inside there is nothing,—not even one of the bones of the wild beasts that were dug up with so much pains and labour.

I have now given you an account of the walls of Rome, and of the remains of the more ancient buildings comprised in them, and I ought to enter upon the Gates; but their ancient names, their number, and their situation, are involved in such complete obscurity, endless discussion, and inextricable confusion, that I shrink from the prospect of undertaking such a task myself, or inflicting such a penance on you. I want courage to lead you into the barren path, where we must fight every step of our way, and be stuck fast at last in a quagmire of conjectures.

In the time of Romulus, according to some authorities, Rome had three gates; according to others, four; but as it now cannot very materially signify which, I shall not

perplex you with a long discussion on their disputed number, names, and situation, but refer you to Nardini, where you will find the subject treated at large.

In the time of the empire, according to Pliny, there were thirty-seven gates, which certainly seem a most unnecessary number, especially as he says twelve of them were double;* and the antiquaries of this day, who think they know better than he, won't believe him. All the great roads to the city had then double gates; one for those who were entering, the other for those who were leaving it.

At every gate stood the statue of some deity, the right hand of which, it would seem, was often nearly worn away with kissing,† just as St. Peter's toe is now.‡

At present Rome has sixteen gates, including the four of the *Città Leonina*, but several of them have been walled up.

By far the finest of them is the Porta Maggiore. This noble monument of Roman architecture, though now converted into a gate of the modern city, was originally an arch of the Aqueduct of Claudius, restored by Vespasian and Titus, and constructed with extraordinary elevation and embellishment, as was usual when Aqueducts crossed the public way. This fact is proved by a triple inscription, which it still bears, commemorating its erection by the first, and its restoration by the two last named of these emperors. This noble arch is built of immense squares of Tiburtine stone, joined together without cement, and supported by Ionic pillars of proportionate solidity. Like almost every building of antiquity at Rome, it seems to have been used as a fortress in the disastrous ages of feudal warfare.

In consequence of the extension of the walls, all the gates of Rome are now removed, more or less, beyond their ancient situation.

The ancient Porta Flaminia on the north is now sup-

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* Pliny, Hist. Nat. lib. iii. cap. 5. "Ad singulas Portas quæ sunt hodie numero XXXVII ita ut XII portæ semel numerentur."

† Vide Lucr. lib. i. ver. 318.

‡ The toe of the brazen statue of the saint in his church is the grand object of devotion among the modern Romans.

plied by the Porta del Popolo ; the Porta Capena on the south by the Porta San Sebastiano ;* the Porta Salaria on the east alone retains *one* of its ancient names, for it had several. It was the Porta Salaria, *alias* Collina, *alias* Quirinalis, *alias* Agonensis, *alias* Scelerata, or rascally gate, which appellation it derived from the Campus Sceleratus, a piece of ground situated a little beyond it, in which the vestal virgins, who had violated their vows, were buried alive.

Livy, I think, invariably calls this gate the Porta Collina.

It was to this gate that Hannibal rode, attended by two thousand guards, to reconnoitre the wall and defences of the city he destined for destruction ; and it was through this gate that Alaric, by the treachery of its guards, entered the city at midnight on the 24th of August, A. D. 410, and firing the houses as he passed, to light him on his march, gave up Rome, for the third time since its foundation, to be sacked by an army of Goths.

On the west of Rome, the Porta San Paola, which is the substitute for the *Porta Ostiensis*, still, as formerly, leads to Ostia, and through it Genseric, at the head of his Vandals, after landing at that port from Africa, entered Rome the 15th June, A. D. 455, and was encountered—not by a Roman army—but by Pope Leo the Great, at the head of a procession of priests.† The ancient Mistress of the World, the invincible conqueror of other nations, had now to trust for her own security to prayers, not to arms, and humbly to beseech the pity of the barbarian. In vain: the unceasing plunder of fourteen days and nights, the spoil of temples and of palaces, the flames of houses, the shrieks of their murdered inmates, and the

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* The Porta Capena, which led to the Via Appia, is supposed to have stood near the little church of St. Nereo ed Achilleo ; and the Porta Flaminia within the modern Corso, and so of all the rest. The Porta Capena is computed to have been a mile within its present substitute.

The first ancient Roman mile-stone on the Appian Way was found in a vineyard, about a hundred yards beyond the present Porta San Sebastiano. A mile measured back from the spot where it was discovered terminates at the Church of St. Nereo ed Achilleo.

† Vide Gibbon, Decline and Fall, vol. vi.

groans of a people led away into slavery, attested his remorseless vengeance.

The Porta Pia was once the Porta Nomentana, through which the Roman people twice retreated to the Sacred Mount, when oppressed by their rulers, and through which Nero fled from the vengeance of the people he had oppressed.

The Porta San Lorenzo, which was probably the ancient Porta Tiburtina, still leads to Tivoli, the ancient Tibur.

The Porta San Giovanni, now the great entrance from Naples, nearly corresponds to the ancient Porta Celimontana; between it and the Porta San Sebastiano was the Porta Latina, now blocked up.

Close to the Porta San Giovanni, and on the right of it as you leave Rome, you see the now blocked up Porta Asinaria, which was betrayed to Totila by the perfidy of the Isaurian sentinels who guarded it, and through which he made his dreaded entrance into Rome, when the wretched inhabitants, after having experienced the last extremities of famine, felt the *mercy* of the barbarian.

Gibbon relates, that at break of day he knelt before the tomb of St. Peter, and while in the act of praying before the altar of the God of Mercy, eighty-five Romans were butchered by his command in the portico of the church. Rome was pillaged. "The sons and daughters of Roman consuls wandered in tattered garments through the streets, and begged their bread, perhaps without success, before the gates of their hereditary mansions."*

Still was his rage unsatiated against "the city that had so long delayed the course of his victories." Already was the fatal command issued, "that Rome should be turned into a pasture for cattle," and that the plough should pass over her proud fabrics,—already was the torch lighted, and the combustibles prepared, that were to consume the splendours of antiquity, when the warning voice of Belisarius called on his victorious enemy, "Not to sully his fame by the destruction of those monu-

* Gibbon, Decline and Fall.

ments which were the glory of the dead, and the delight of the living."* Totila listened to the admonition of a rival, and Rome was preserved.

LETTER XIV.

"But I will sing above all monuments,
Seven Roman hills—the world's seven wonderments."†

Rome was always the City of the Seven Hills. They were held sacred and a festival was annually celebrated in December, called the Dies Septimontium.‡ Indeed, I must say that the ancient Romans seem to have been quite as fond of idleness, or diversion, under the name of religion, as the modern Italians, and had as many *festas* in these days as they have now. But this has nothing to do with the hills—

——— "these Seven Hills—which be now
Tombs of her greatness, which did threat the sky."

I would, however, advise you not to raise your expectations of them too high. My ideas were far too towering. I had unconsciously formed a kind of notion that their magnitude must be proportioned to their fame—which, to be sure, was about as reasonable as if one should expect that a man of great celebrity must necessarily be taller than his neighbours.

So far from being hills of extraordinary elevation, however, I have even had my doubts whether some of them can be called hills at all. I think they should rather be called *banks* or *braes;* not so much because they are little, as because they have an ascent on one side only. The Pala-

* Gibbon, Decline and Fall.
† Spenser's Ruins of Rome.
‡ Vide Varro.—De Ling. Lat. lib. v. Dies Septimontium ab his septem montibus in quibus sita urbs est.

tine, the Aventine, the Capitol, and even the Cœlian, are indeed legitimate, if not lofty mounts; but the Esquiline and the Quirinal, though they certainly boast a pretty considerable rise on the side of Rome, have no fall on the opposite side, as far as I can discover. As for the Viminal Hill, I have never yet been able to find it at all, though I have made a most diligent search after it. Nor is it invisible to my eyes only, for I have never yet been so fortunate as to meet with any one hardy enough to maintain that he had himself seen it, though some believe in it, and all talk of it with due respect, as if it were still in existence; whereas it is, in truth, a deceased mount; and not only dead, but buried. The fall of the ruins from the Esquiline and Quirinal Hills, between which it was situated, together with that of its own buildings, has interred it with them in one common grave.

Let us, however, ascend all that now remain of the Seven Hills of Ancient Rome; and while from their summit we recall all the works of magnificence and fame that once overspread them, let us bestow one glance at the aspect they now present to the eye of a stranger, whose far distant pilgrimage has been made to visit them.

The Palatine Hill, to which we must first direct our steps, is now, as it was anciently, square; and its circumference, or rather its quadrangle,—for it has four corners,—is said to be a full mile.

With all my respect for this venerable mount, I must say that it is very little. I had previously been disappointed in the lowly height of the Capitol; but I stood yet more amazed at the square, flat-topped, and dwarfish elevation of the Palatine. It must certainly have been materially degraded by the fall of the successive generations of buildings which have stood on it, from the straw-roofed cottages of Romulus and his *Roma quadrata*, to the crumbling erections of Popes and Cardinals. The ruins of these multifarious edifices, heaped up round its base, have raised the surface at least twenty feet above the ancient level; still, with all the allowances one can make, it must originally have been very little of a hill indeed.

It is not, therefore, in any respect to its appearance that we owe the sensations of admiration and undying interest

with which we regard it. It is, that every step we tread here is big with recollections—for it was the scene of early glory, the spot where Rome grew into greatness and fell into decay—where those immortal spirits lived and acted who have been through successive ages the luminaries of the earth, and where the light first dawned of that freedom and civilization which still sheds its brightness through the world. That spot which once comprised the whole of Rome; which, till the extinction of the republic, contained the dwellings of her senators, and the temples of her gods; but which, during the empire, was found to be too circumscribed for the wants of one individual—is now heaped with the wide spreading ruins of that magnificent edifice, which was the abode of her tyrants and the tomb of her liberties.

Over the wide expanse of the Palatine—successively peopled with a race of warlike kings, with the orators, the philosophers, and the heroes of the republic, and with the crowded population of an imperial court—no human dwelling or habitation is now to be seen, except where one solitary convent shelters a few bare-footed friars, and where, amid the ruined arches and buried halls of the Palace of the Cæsars, the labourers of the vineyards and cabbage gardens that now flourish over them, have made their wretched abodes.

But let us look back from the melancholy desolation of its present state to earlier times.

The history of the Palatine Hill is an epitome of that of civilized society. From the days when Romulus encompassed it with a ploughshare, and raised upon it the humble sheds of his followers, and the straw-roofed cottage of their chief, it progressively advanced through the stages of convenience, embellishment, and splendour, till it reached the extreme of luxury and magnificence in the *Domus Aurea* of Nero. From that period, it gradually declined to its last degenerate state of ruin, and has now become once more deserted.

A fanciful mind might say, that before the Romans it exhibited the pastoral age; in their early times, the iron age; in the close of the republic, and dawn of the empire,

the golden age; and, for many a century back, the age of brass, the last and worst.

Besides a brief account, in two folio volumes, of the early history of the Palatine Hill, many long and learned treatises have been written on the fruitful subject of its etymology. Whether it took its names from Pales, the goddess of sheep, who used to tend her flocks here, or from Pallas, the goddess of wisdom, or from Pallas, the great-grandfather of Evander, or from Palas, an Arcadian town, or from Palatium, a city in the territory of Reate, (which was one of the many places that sent a colony to this hill,) or from Palantes, which bore allusion to the wandering tribes that dwelt upon it, I leave you to decide; settle it exactly as you like best.

Again, as we are upon the head of etymology, I must beg you to remember, that having derived its own name from—something, it certainly gave the name of Palatium to the habitation of the Kings of Rome, from whence the name of palace in all European languages.

Though the year in which Rome was founded is disputed, the day is correctly ascertained.* It was the 21st of April; and in commemoration of it, the *Palilia*, or festival of the pastoral goddess, Pales, continued to be celebrated as long as the Kings, the Consuls, or the Emperors of the Romans held their ancient seat in the Palatine; for it was not till the government was removed to Byzantium, and Christianity was established in the land by Constantine, that this festival was discontinued.

The straw-roofed cottage of Romulus, beside which grew the sacred cornel tree, was on the north-western side of the hill, looking down on the "Pulchrum Littus;"† but vainly should we now seek to ascertain its exact site. As vainly should we look for the *Velia* where the house of Publicolo stood, or for the *Sub Velia* beneath it, scarcely less famed in the annals of the republic. The former is conjectured to have been the summit of the Palatine Hill, between the churches of S. Toto, and S. Anastasio; and the latter, a sloping descent which led down from thence

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* Vide Livy, lib. i. † Plutarch's Life of Romulus.

to the Valabrum. As vainly should we look for the *Lupercal*, which must have been on this north side of the mount, or for any traces of all the temples, the altars, the porticos, and the multifarious buildings that stood here before the days of Augustus—or seek to discover the varnished sites of the houses of the Gracchi, of Hortensius, of Crassus, of Clodius, of Catiline, and of Cicero,—whose house, you may remember, was destroyed on his exile, through the successful cabal of Clodius, rebuilt by the Senate on his triumphant return, and again confiscated after his murder.* It seems to have been situated on the highest part of the hill; but fancy vainly essays to pitch upon the spot where it stood. All the structures, and even the natural features of the hill, were swept away with the ruins of the republic, to make way for the dwelling of the Master of the world; and the eye now vainly wanders over vast masses of broken walls choked up with rubbish, unable, amidst its desolation, to form any picture of what once existed here.

I have made repeated visits to this hill; I have spent whole days upon it; I have been there with the most renowned antiquaries, professional and unprofessional; I have read, and thought, and inquired about it; and all I have gained by puzzling my own brains, and those of other people, is the simple fact I knew at first—that it is covered with the walls of the Palace of the Cæsars, in confused and undistinguishable ruin, and that all attempts to investigate or comprehend their plan or detail, must now prove wholly fruitless.

Some antiquaries don't seem to be of this opinion; they have made plans upon plans of the Imperial Palace, completely finished, even to the pantries, with no assistance but a few broken walls and their own imaginations; and all of these, though as unlike as possible to each other, probably bear an equal resemblance to the original. But perhaps it may not be altogether uninteresting, before we examine the ruins of this prodigious edifice, to bestow a moment's attention on the ordinary plan of the houses of

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* Vide Middleton's Life, and Plutarch's Life of Cicero.

the Romans, which it is easy to form a tolerably correct idea of, partly from the description of Vitruvius, and partly from the investigation of the ruins of Pompeii.*

Whatever may have been the variations from the general mode of building—and no doubt they were numerous—there are three parts which seem to have been common to every Roman house of any importance. These were, the vestibulum, the atrium, and the cavædium.

The vestibule was a spacious open space, or portico, before the door, where the patrician took his morning's walk, and received the solicitations of his clients or dependents; a practice to which Cicero often alludes. Then followed the atrium, or portico, a large hall, into which the sleeping rooms and servants' room looked. Beyond this was the cavædium, an open court, generally surrounded by a covered portico, into which the eating rooms, the baths, the library,—when there was one,—and all the principal rooms of the family opened; and in the centre of which there was usually a fountain. In the country, and in small towns, the houses were generally of one story; and the rooms, if they were lighted at all, were lighted from the top; but many of the little rooms at Pompeii seem to have received light only from the door.

In Rome, and other large cities, the houses consisted of several stories, and frequent laws were made to restrict their height, which Augustus limited to seventy feet, a proof that they must have sometimes exceeded it. It is obvious that such houses, unless the apartments were left in total darkness, must have been lighted with windows like ours. Yet many of the antiquaries of Rome will not allow that any Roman houses had windows; and loud and long are the battles that have been waged upon this head.

It is certain that the *generality* of the houses of Pompeii have no windows, but neither have they now any roofs; therefore the light may have been admitted through the roofs, as they are, for the most part, only

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* This letter, though inserted here, was not written till after the author's return from Naples.

one story in height. In like manner, in the remains of Hadrian's Villa, at Tivoli, there are no windows; but we must remember that, in the first place, the rooms may also have been lighted from the top; and, secondly, that this palace was any thing but Roman. It was Greek, Egyptian, and Asiatic. It was copied from all the buildings of all the countries Hadrian had visited in his travels; so that it is not a case in point; and even if he chose to live in the dark, it is no proof that his subjects did. Besides, there may have been windows in the Villa Adriana, for a very small part of it now remains, even in ruin; and there certainly are windows in one of the great halls in the Baths of Caracalla.

All this, indeed, is mere idle speculation. We know, whatever the antiquaries may say to the contrary, that the Romans had windows in their houses. Cicero would not have defended the smallness of the windows in his new house in the Palatine, from the censure of his friend Atticus;* Pliny would not have enumerated all the windows in all the apartments of all his villas;† Plautius Sylvanus could not have killed his wife by throwing her out of a window;‡ and Tibullus§ would never have commemorated the fate of the poor woman that fell out of a window into the street, if there had been no such things.

Besides, among the paintings found at Herculaneum, I observed one in which the houses were represented with windows; and at Pompeii there are several instances of windows.

Vitruvius, too, somewhere speaks of houses which had windows from the ceiling to the floor; and, in another place, recommends a great deal of light to country houses.

Some antiquaries, again, who allow the Romans windows, refuse them glass, or any substitute for it, and suppose that all winter, when it was cold, they sate in the dark.

If I mistake not, the younger Pliny, in his minute ac-

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* Middleton's Life of Cicero, vol. i. p. 302, edit. 8vo. Lond. 1742.
† Epist. lib. ii. Ep. 17, and lib. v. Ep. 6.
‡ Lib. ii. Eleg. 7.
§ Tacitus Ann. lib. iv. cap. 21.

count of his Laurentinum Villa, says that the windows are glazed (admit light and exclude air;) nor does he seem to mention it as a very unusual circumstance. He also notices a room in the garden with a glass (or glazed) door.

Winkelman* mentions a Roman painting, supposed to be of the age of Constantine, which represented a great number of houses with windows, all of which were glazed. This painting was enchased in the wall of the Casino Cesi; but the Prince Pamfili had it whitewashed over, quite clean!

However, it would seem that glass windows were not of very ancient date, since Seneca speaks of the art of glazing, as one of those not discovered till about his own time;† and Vopiscus, in his Life of Aurelian, mentions glass windows as a luxury; so that they must, even at that late period, have been used only by the opulent. Still this is sufficient to prove that they were known; and indeed the quantity not only of broken glass vessels, but of glass in plates, found at Herculaneum, is an indisputable proof, if proof were necessary, that the ancients understood the art of making glass plates; and, when made, it is really quite incredible that they should never have thought of putting them into their windows.

It appears, that a semi-transparent stone, called *lapis specularis*, was more early, and more generally used than glass for the purpose of glazing windows.‡ It separated into thin plates, or laminæ, and seems to have been a species of mica or talc. Pliny says it chiefly came from Spain, and adds, that bee-hives were sometimes made of it, in order that the habits of those insects might be observed by the curious;§ so that we are to suppose that the ancients gave their bees windows, while they denied

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* Observations sur l'Architecture des Anciens, 70.

† Epist. 90. Seneca.

‡ It would appear that curtains only, instead of the *specularia*, were sometimes used to close the aperture of windows, or rather, perhaps, the curtains were used to shade the sun; the specularia to exclude the cold and admit the light. "Neque specularia, neque vitra, quæ frigoris causa, vel umbræ, in domo sunt."—*Ulpian.*

§ Pliny, lib. 21. cap. 14.

them to themselves! Indeed, according to the antiquaries, the houses of the ancients must have been most uncomfortable places, for they not only refuse them glass windows, but chimneys. They pretend that they warmed themselves and dressed their food *entirely* by means of braziers filled with ignited charcoal, set in the middle of the room—a very common, unwholesome, and disagreeable custom in the south of Italy, to this day—and one which I make no doubt the ancients, as well as the moderns practised. But I also think that without doubt they, as well as the moderns, had chimneys and fires. Virgil speaks of carousing *before* the fire :* had it been a brazier of hot charcoal, he would have said *around* it. He also describes the husbandman and his wife labouring by the fire on the long winter nights.† Horace, too, in his beautiful picture of rural domestic happiness, represents the wife heaping up the cheerful hearth, to welcome home the wearied labourer ;‡ and in another of his odes, he tells them to heap on plenty of wood, to make a blazing fire ;§ and he complains bitterly of wet wood and a smoky chimney in his journey to Brundusium.‖

The hearth was always considered the sacred seat of hospitality, and guarded by the household gods themselves. Did not Coriolanus place himself upon it when he sought the protection of Tullus Aufidius ?¶

It is also stated, that many of the proscribed victims of the Triumvirate hid themselves in chimneys during the search that was made after them.

That there are no fire-places to be seen in the remains of Pompeii, is no objection, because the mildness of the climate of Magna Græcia—for which the luxurious Ro-

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* "*Ante* Focum si frigus erit." *Buc.* V.

† "Et quidam seros hiberni ad luminis ignes
Pervigilat," &c. *Georgic.* I. 291.

‡ "Sacrum vetustis extruat lignis focum
Lassi sub adventum viri."—*Horat.* Epod. Lib. Ode 2.

§ "Dissolve frigus, ligna super foco
Large reponens."—Lib. i. Ode 9.

‖ He says they slept in a house at the foot of the Apulian mountains.
"—— lacrimoso non sine fumo,
Udos cum foliis ramos urente *camino*."—*Horat.* Lib. i. Sat. 2.

¶ Plutarch. Life of M. T. Coriolanus.

mans sought its happy shores—renders firing wholly unnecessary, even in winter. Even to this day, there is scarcely a fire-place in the house of a Neapolitan.* But the winter climate of Rome, on the contrary, was *then* very different to what it is now, as the falls of snow, the frosts, and the freezing of the Tiber itself, mentioned by ancient writers, sufficiently prove.

But all these disquisitions—and you must have found them sufficiently tiresome—will assist us little in tracing the wide-spread ruins of the Palace of the Cæsars, in which there are neither doors nor windows, nor chimneys, nor fire-places, nor roofs, nor floors. We see, indeed, that it must have had three stories, and we know that it possessed numerous vestibules, atria, cavædia, &c. communicating by long corridors; filled with baths and banqueting rooms, and fountains, and tennis-courts; surrounded with gardens, and theatres, and hippodromes, and gymnasia; and abounding in every incentive to luxury and voluptuousness.

Augustus was the founder of the Palace of the Cesars. He comprised within his own habitation the house of Hortensius, of Cicero, and of some other of the victims of that bloody proscription which sealed the last Triumvirate.

That he built one house, is certain; and according to some antiquaries, he built two; for the first, it seems, was struck by lightning; and as the ancients considered a building on which the thunderbolt of Jove had descended, as for ever sacred to that god, he was obliged to resign it to him: but whether he gave up the whole, or only that part of it which the Thunderer had chosen—whether he built a distinct house for himself, or only enlarged the former one, so as to enable both himself and Jupiter to live together in it—history is silent; the antiquaries are at variance; and, for my own part, I am ignorant.†

It is universally agreed, that the first house, or houses,

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* During the whole of the winter months which we passed at Naples, we had no fire.

† Suetonius states (29) that Augustus erected the temple of the Palatine Apollo in that part of his house which had been struck by lightning—thus resigning it not to Jove, but to Phœbus.

of Augustus, were not remarkably spacious or magnificent.* The buildings of his day, however, far outshone in splendour all that had been seen before in Rome, although, towards the close of the republic, luxury had made such rapid strides, that the accounts we read of the number and splendour of the villas of private citizens, of Pompey, Crassus, Lucullus, and Cicero, would seem incredible, if their very ruins did not, even to this day, attest, that, in extent, and in magnificence, they must have surpassed the palaces of modern princes.†

Yet such was the artful policy of Augustus, and so much did he affect the seeming moderation of a Roman citizen, that when he did build a magnificent house, he pretended it was not for himself, but for the habitation of the Pontifex Maximus, well knowing that he would be chosen for that august office.

It was the boast of Augustus, "that he found Rome of brick, and left it of marble;‡ and perhaps, to the degenerate Romans, that proved a sufficient compensation for his finding Rome free, and leaving it enslaved.

The house of Augustus is believed to have been on the north-west§ part of the Palatine, looking down on the *Pulchrum Littus*, "the beautiful shore" near the Tiber, and on the spot formerly occupied by the straw-roofed cottage of Romulus, which had long before disappeared.

Not satisfied with the splendid dwelling of his predecessor, Tiberius built himself a house on the north side of

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* Suetonius, Life of Augustus, 72.

† On the shore of the Bay of Baiæ, and of Molo di Gaeta. These stupendous remains of patrician villas are a curious contrast to the plebeian houses of Pompeii, where the rooms are like closets. The Library at Herculaneum, in which the whole of the volumes, now unrolling, were found, was so small, that a man, with outstretched arms, could measure its dimensions either way.

‡ Suetonius, Life of Augustus, 29.

§ The antiquaries are all at cross purposes about the respective situations of the Emperor's houses. Bianchini, who wrote a large folio on the subject, and spent his whole life in making plans of the Palace of the Cæsars, and yet died before he finished them, makes the house of Augustus front the Cœlian; that of Tiberius, the Roman Forum; and that of Caligula, the Velabrum. The account I have given is that generally received, and has been deduced from Suetonius, Tacitus, and a multitude of ancient authors—the discussion of which totally exhausted my patience, and would, I am sure, prove too much for that of the reader.

the Palatine, looking into the Velabrum. Caligula, though he had the two houses of the two preceding Emperors, built himself two more; one on the north-east corner of the Palatine, fronting the Capitol, and the other on the Capitoline Hill itself; and these he connected together by a bridge* thrown across the Forum, which Claudius, though not very wise himself, had sense enough to pull down, as well as the house on the Capitol.

Then came Nero and built himself a house, which he called *Transitoria*,† and burnt it down, and Rome along with it; and erected in the *Domus Aurea*,† a palace, such as the world never saw. Not only was the whole of its interior covered with gold and with gems, in profusion surpassing the fabulous splendour of Arabian tales, but it was adorned with the finest paintings and statues the world could furnish—the most exquisite productions of Grecian art. We read, too, of triple porticos a mile in length; of a circular banqueting room, that perpetually turned round night and day, in imitation of the motion of the sun; of vaulted ceilings of ivory, which opened of themselves and scattered flowers upon the guests, and golden pipes that shed over them showers of soft perfumes.† Not content with covering the whole of the Palatine with his "Golden House," Nero extended its gardens and pleasure-grounds over the whole plain south of the Forum, and even upon the Esquiline and Cœlian Hills.

The Colosseum occupies the site of the largest of those lakes Nero made in his gardens, which Tacitus describes in such glowing colours; but which—judging from the con-

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* Building bridges seems to have been one of Caligula's favourite manias; for he actually threw one over the wide expanse of the Bay of Baiæ, the pretended ruins of which are still shown at Puzzuoli, by the *Lazzaroni Ciceroni* there. These remains, however, are of stone, and Caligula's bridge was made of boats or ships, anchored, fastened together, and covered with earth.* Indeed, the freak never would have lasted long enough to have built it of more durable materials, even if it had been practicable. The ruins which bear the name of his bridge, seemed to have formed a part of the mole constructed by Augustus, when he formed the Julian harbour, and let the sea into the Lucrine and Avernian Lakes.

† Suetonius, Life of Nero, 31.

* Vide Suetonius, in Vita Calig.

fined space there is to divide among so many courts, corridors, porticos, and theatres; vineyards, groves, cornfields, and menageries;* woods, waters, hills, and dales,—could have been nothing better than "fish-ponds deep." Indeed, we are puzzled to find room for them on the most limited scale, when we compare the ground with the description of the historian.

"On the ruins of his native country, Nero erected a palace, in which the profusion of gold and precious stones did not raise the chief admiration, for these were ornaments that widely-diffused luxury had rendered common; but universal astonishment was excited by its spacious glades, and large artificial lakes—by its thick woods and shades, like vast wildernesses—by its ample lawns and avenues, and far-extended prospects."†

But we must remember that the word *lacus* was applied by the Romans to every piece of still water, however small; nay, even to the vases or reservoirs of fountains. For example, Pliny says Agrippa made lacus DCC,‡ a number of lakes which would certainly have inundated Rome, if they had been any thing larger than the basins of fountains. Sextus Rufus, and Victor, enumerate *lacus* LXXXIII in the first of the fourteen regions of Rome, and a proportionate number in the rest; and it is obvious that such is their signification. The *lakes* of Nero's golden house, therefore, may for the most part have been very small ponds of water, or even reservoirs of fountains; but the principal one, which was drained to make way for the immense circumference of the Flavian Amphitheatre, is described by Suetonius as "like a sea."

It is said, that Vespasian, at the same time that he drained the lake, pulled down all that Nero had erected beyond the Palatine,§ reducing the Imperial Palace to the hill that once contained Rome; and that he built the stupendous Amphitheatre, the Temple of Peace, and the

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* Suetonius, Life of Nero, 31.

† Ann. Tac. lib. xv. cap. 42.

‡ Pliny, lib. xxxvi. cap. 15, and Nardini, lib. iii. cap. 4.

§ It is singular, that Suetonius, who records the draining of this lake makes no mention of the destruction of any part of the palace.

Baths of Titus, out of the materials of this portion of the *Domus Aurea*. Bricks, however, could not have been converted into Tiburtine stone; and the whole of Nero's palace was of the former, but the exterior of the Colosseum is of the latter.

Domitian began to build up what his predecessors had pulled down, and added to the palace the *Adonea*, or halls and gardens of Adonis, the surpassing splendour of which excited the astonishment even of that age of magnificence. This celebrated building was still standing in the time of Severus, for we see it marked on one of the fragments of the marble plan of Rome, executed in his reign.

On the south of the Palatine, Septimius Severus made several additions, particularly the *Septizonium*,* a building which stood at the south-west corner of the hill, and nearly at its base; not so far from it as the Church of St. Gregory. By some the Septizonium was believed to be an entrance to the palace; by others, a mausoleum; by many, neither; but though its destination was dubious, its beauty was certain; and that beauty proved its destruction; for Sixtus V. fell in love with the three complete orders of marble columns of which it was composed, carried them off to St. Peter's, and utterly demolished this beautiful relic of antiquity.

In the southern part of the palace, about one hundred and fifty years ago, a room full of Roman coins was discovered, and a magnificent hall hung with cloth of gold, which fell into dust as soon as the air was admitted. The coins, of course, were carried off, and both chambers were filled up.

About a hundred years ago, a hall forty feet in length was discovered on the Palatine, the walls of which were entirely covered with paintings. They were taken off, crammed into a box, and sent to Naples with the rest of the invaluable and ill-fated specimens of ancient art that fell into the hands of the Farnese family, and there they

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* That Sep. Severus did build a Septizonium cannot be doubted; but such a building existed long before his time. Suetonius mentions a Septizonium in the Life of Titus.

were permitted to lie, mouldering in damp cellars, until every vestige of the paintings had disappeared.*

Many other chambers have at different times been discovered on the Palatine; but after being rifled of their marble columns, their pavements, their statues, and their precious ornaments, they have all been filled up again.

The fall of the Palace of the Cæsars, like that of almost every other monument of antiquity, was less the work of foreign barbarians than of the Romans themselves.

The Goths, in the fifth century, pillaged it of its gold, its silver, its ivory, and most of its portable treasures. Genseric seized its bronze, and all its remaining precious metals; and the ship-load of statues which the capricious Vandal sent to Africa, was supposed to consist chiefly of the plunder of the Imperial Palace.

The troops of Belisarius lodged in it; so also did the soldiers of Totila during his second occupation of Rome; but that is no proof of its destruction; on the contrary, the spoils of modern excavations have proved how vast were the treasures of art and magnificence which had been spared, or despised, by their forbearance or ignorance: and however the interior splendour of the Palace of the Cæsars might suffer by these barbarian inmates, we know, at least, that its immense exterior, its courts and corridors, and walls, and roofs, and pavements, were in perfect preservation at a much later period; for in the days of Heraclius,† it was still fit to receive a royal guest; and it appears to have been entire in the eighth century, from the mention made of it by Anastasius.

In the long feudal wars of the Roman nobles during the barbarous ages, its ruin began. It was attacked and fortified, taken and retaken, and for a length of time was the central fortress of the Frangipani family, who possessed a chain of redoubts around it, erected on the ruins of Rome.

But its final destruction was consummated by the Farnese popes and princes, who laboriously destroyed its ruins to build up their palaces and villas with the mate-

* Winkelman sur l'Architecture, chap. ii. 27.
† The beginning of the seventh century.

rials; buried these magnificent halls beneath their wretched gardens, and erected upon them the hideous summer-houses and grottos, the deformity of which still impeaches the taste of their architect, Michael Angelo Buonarotti.

To the remains in this part of the Palatine Hill our first visit was directed.

Turning from the arch of Titus up a narrow road, lined with the ruins of the palace walls, we entered the Farnese gardens, which present a curious picture of ancient grandeur and existing wretchedness. The casinos of popes mouldering upon the palaces of Roman emperors—pigs and peasants inhabiting a corner of these splendid ruins—cabbages and artichokes flourishing above them—fragments of precious marbles and granites, of carved cornices and broken alabaster, scattered among the mould,—while the eye wanders over a confused array of long corridors, nameless arcades, unknown vaults, forgotten chambers, and broken arches.

We stand here on the level of the second story of the palace—or the palaces; for antiquaries still affect to point out the different buildings of different emperors; and according to their account, all that Augustus, Tiberius, and Caligula ever erected, survived the conflagration of Nero. On the north-east corner of the Palatine, fronting to the Capitol, they show you the house of Caligula, which is now a rope-walk; and further along the north side, they conduct you to the house of Tiberius, though there is no visible division or distinction between them. The house of Tiberius is, however, mentioned in the reign of Galba,* and subsequently we hear that Antoninus Pius made it his residence.

We left the emperor's houses to follow an old woman who had been screaming to us for some time in the usual ear-piercing tones of Roman females, and crossing a field of artichokes, descended a long flight of steps into two subterranean chambers, which have once been baths of

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* Tacitus, Hist. lib. i. cap. 21, mentions that Otho, leaving the temple of the Palatine Apollo, passed through the house of Tiberius into the Velabrum.

the Imperial Palace, but which, though adorned with much magnificence, could never have possessed the blessings of either light or air. By the glimmering of some wax tapers, we saw the gilded ceiling of these splendid dungeons still shining in the passing ray, and painted with figures designed with exquisite taste and correctness. By the old woman, these chambers, were called the Baths of Livia; by the antiquary, the Baths of Tiberius; and as there is not the shadow of a reason for either name, I shall choose the old woman's, as the more general designation. Whatever baths they were anciently, I can aver, that they still answer the purpose of baths tolerably well; being so damp, that the water poured down copiously upon our heads, and in endeavouring to avoid these streams from above, we plunged up to the ankles into an unseen pool on the floor, by which our ardour for the fine arts, and more especially for ancient paintings, was so effectually cooled, that we made all imaginable haste to upper day, and the warm beams of an Italian sun.

On the height of the southern extremity of the Farnese gardens, beneath a grove of aged ilex, whose dark evergreen shade contrasts beautifully with the whiteness of the Parian marble, lie the broken columns, overthrown capitals, and beautiful sculpture of an ancient temple, supposed to have been that magnificent temple of Apollo, built by Augustus after the battle of Actium, to the god to whose influence he ascribed the victory. The naval trophies, the dolphins and the hippogriff, which are still sculptured on the marble, would seem to place its identity beyond dispute: but with antiquaries nothing is indisputable; and some of them, in the very teeth of the hippogriff, call it the temple of Neptune.

Propertius, in describing the Temple of the Palatine Apollo, mentions, that the tympanum was adorned with a bass relief of the battle of the Amazons; and on a fragment of the marble which still lies beneath the ilex trees, we saw the figure of an Amazon combating with an Athenian. We are therefore, I think, justified, in concluding these to have been remains of the Temple of the Palatine Apollo.

It was encircled with an exterior portico, formed of

columns of Giallo Antico ;* but every part of the temple itself was composed of Parian marble, the beauty of which is still apparent, even in its shattered remains.

Beneath the statue of the god which stood in the cella, were placed the Sybilline books, which were removed thither from the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus by Augustus,† for it was a part of his artful policy to make himself master of the most sacred public deposites. In the area in front of the temple stood the famous Grecian colossal statue of Apollo, brought from Tarentum. In these days the Romans did not imitate the example of that republican conqueror, who, being asked at the taking of Tarentum if he would not carry off its masterpieces of sculpture and painting to Rome, contemptuously exclaimed, "Let us leave the Tarentines their angry gods!"

Lastly, but not the least among its treasures, this temple possessed the famous Palatine Library, and a museum of Natural History, established by Marcellus.‡

A court of critics, instituted by Augustus, consisting of five members only, was held in this temple, without whose sanction no play could be represented on the stage; and before these censors poets used to recite their rival compositions.

On this spot, I found, to my great delight, some leaves of the acanthus growing wild; and contrasting their native luxuriance with their sculptured forms clustering round the fallen Corinthian capitals at my feet, I scarcely knew whether most to admire the perfection of art in the imitation, or the taste which first adopted it as an architectural ornament.

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* A beautiful ancient marble, of a bright yellow ground, variously veined, found in great quantity among the ruins of Rome.

† Vide Suetonius. The three *ancient* Sybilline books, which Tarquin purchased of the Sybil herself, were burnt in the Capitol during the Marsic war, after which ambassadors were sent to every quarter to collect authentic oracles of the Sybil, to remedy the disaster as far as possible; and these volumes contained this second compilation or edition. Augustus at this period burnt two thousand books of the pretended Sybil's prophecies, as spurious. (Vide Suet. Life of Augustus, 31.) Those accounted genuine, and preserved beneath the statue of the Palatine Apollo, were burnt by Honorius.

‡ Pliny, lib. xxxvii. cap. 1. § 5.

The well-known origin of the invention, the chance by which Callimachus beheld its growing leaves bursting through the neglected basket, could only have been seized and improved upon by a mind alive to beauty, as were those of the ancient artists of Greece. The small minute leaf of the olive, which was afterwards introduced in Corinthian capitals, is far inferior in effect, and the coarse shapeless leaves of aquatic plants only came into use in the latter ages, when nothing better could be executed.

But all the ancient Corinthian columns of the ruins of Rome are adorned with the graceful foliage of the acanthus. This plant grows wild in many parts of Italy, but never flowers, except on the southern shores of Magna Græcia.

It was a favourite ornament in Roman gardens, and possibly the very leaves we now gathered may have sprung from the natural offspring of those plants which once adorned the grounds of the Palace of the Cæsars.

The remains of the Temple of Cybele, built by Livia, are stated to have stood upon the Palatine so late as the seventeenth century. The first temple in Rome dedicated to that common mother, was built during the second Punic War,* but afterwards destroyed.

A tremendous catalogue of temples on this mount, even in the imperial age, is given by various writers; among which are the temples of various Fortunes and Jupiters, of two or three Junos, of Victory (in general,) and German Victory (in particular,) of the gods of the Cæsars, of Augustus, of Heliogabalus, of Fever, of Bacchus, of Minerva, of Orcus (or Pluto,) of the Luna Noctiluca, which shone by night, and of Viriplaca, a goddess for whom, as I understand she presided over matrimonial reconciliations, I have too great a respect to pass over in silence.

We left the "Orti Farnesiani," which little deserve their name, for they boast not a single shrub or flower,—not even

> "A rose of the wilderness left on its stalk,
> To mark where a garden had been"—

* Livy, Dec. 3. lib. xxix. cap. 37.—A. U. 548.

and proceeded up the narrow gloomy lane leading to the convent. It is a *Via Crucis*, lined with the pictured representations of Christ's fourteen stages beneath the Cross.* It was well observed to me, that the way now sacred to the Redeemer of the world had once been trodden by its destroyers; that he, being God, condescended to become man; that they, being men, exalted themselves to gods; and that the strain of incense now breathed here to *him*, who in mercy shed his precious blood to save human kind, was once raised on this very spot to those ruthless tyrants, who in wanton barbarity sacrificed millions to glut their diabolical passion for torture and cruelty.

After our patience had been exercised for nearly half an hour in battering an old wooden gate, we were admitted into the grounds of what, by courtesy, is called the Villa Magnani, formerly the Villa Spada; but no villa whatever is to be seen; and the tumbling down summer-houses, and the gardens—if weeds and cabbages deserve such a name—are still more wretched than those of the Farnese which we had just left.

There is nothing worth looking at except a suite of chambers under ground, to which we descended by a flight of, I think, above forty steps. It is scarcely half a century since they were excavated by an Englishman, who has placed an inscription in them, declaring them consecrated to the fine arts. We found them filled with empty wine casks.

Their form and architecture are beautiful. They are known by the name of the Baths of Nero, but have no appearance of having been baths. Some of the antiquaries call them *Cœnacula*, or eating rooms of the house of Augustus,† and others confess the real fact, that it is impossible to know what they were.

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* The Catholics assume, in direct opposition to three of the gospels—which relate that Simon the Cyrenian was compelled to bear the cross—that Christ bore it himself, and that he sunk beneath it fourteen times on the way to the place of execution.—What passage of Scripture can they adduce in support of the latter assertion?

† These rooms are, however, on the south side of the hill, and the house of Augustus is generally stated to have been on the north-west. We must

The faded frescos of the ruinous Casino in these grounds are falsely ascribed to Raphael.

From thence we drove round the southern base of the Palatine along the line of the Via Triumphalis, passed under the arches, said to have been built by Septimius Severus, in prolongation of Nero's Aqueduct, which carried it from the brink of the Cœlian Mount into the Imperial Palace; and from the west side of the Palatine, entered the ruins of the Golden House by a steep, narrow, dirty staircase, ill suited to the ancient splendour of such a mansion: and making our way through a quantity of sheds, pig-sties, and cabbage heaps, we climbed up the ruins by long flights of steps, *vilely* modern, adorned with clay crucifixions.

The terrace at the top is on the corridors of Nero's Palace, and was once the pavement of the third story. Immediately below it is the Circus Maximus, which occupied the whole valley between the Palatine and the Aventine; and though all traces of the building have disappeared, its form is still very apparent.

At one end of the terrace is a sort of balcony, called, in popular language, the *Gabinetto di Nerone*, from whence Nero is said to have viewed the games,* and given the signal for their commencement by throwing the napkin.

Near it is a little round place which goes by the truly ridiculous name of the Bath of Seneca, in which, we are gravely assured, that philosopher bled to death; although we know that he died at his villa, four miles from Rome.† That this place never could have been a bath, and that it may perchance have been a staircase, is sufficiently evident from the bare inspection of it.

But a building, if it be round, is always called either a bath or a temple; for instance, in the grounds below the terrace, amidst a heap of other nameless ruins, are the

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be content to rest assured that they formed a part of the Imperial Palace. All else is mere supposition.

* Suetonius relates (Life of Nero, 11,) that he used to view the games in the Theatre from the top of the Proscenium; and in the Amphitheatre, reclining upon a couch in the Podium; but no mention is made of his station in the Circus.

† Tacitus, Ann. lib. xv. cap. 60.

remains of a beautiful circular building, which the old woman who enlightens the understanding of strangers with her antiquarian lore, denominates the Temple of Apollo; or sometimes, by way of variety, of Vesta; but which, in all probability, never was any temple whatever. It is very evident that it has formed a part of the palace, but we should find it difficult to give it a satisfactory name.

At the extremity of the terrace, the Palace of Nero joins that part of the ruins which antiquaries generally call the House of Augustus, which also fronts towards the Circus Maximus and the Aventine; occupying the more northern part of the west side of the Palatine. At this point, we looked down into a large open space surrounded by walls, called the Hippodromus of Augustus, which we afterwards visited, but there is very little farther to be seen. In the centre of one side is a semi-circular recess, which possibly may have been the balcony from whence the emperor and his court used to view the equestrian exercises and other diversions exhibited here.*

I must not forget to tell you, that one great antiquary pronounced this balcony to be an Odeum for music; and another assured me, that the Hippodromus was unquestionably—something he called—the *Mediarum* of Heliogabalus, where that young monster used to amuse himself with making snowballs in summer.

The sports of the imperial boy bear a curous similarity to those of the venerable Empress Catherine, who, it is well known, in her wisdom erected a palace of ice in her Russian gardens; so that, in the remotest ages and climates, "great princes" seem to have had the same "playthings."

The road from Rome to the Porta San Sebastiano passes close along the western side of the Palatine Hill. It is generally believed that this road is modern, and that anciently there was none here, because the Circus Max-

* In after times, one of these diversions was the martyrdom of St. Sebastian, who, it is recorded, was executed here, in order that these refined and humane Romans might enjoy the spectacle of his tortures.

imus, and the shops which surrounded it, were built against the Palatine Hill. The Via Appia, to which it leads, (though not exactly in a direct line,) is believed to have had its commencement only at the Porta Capena.

Of the shops, or *Tabernæ*, which were attached to the Circus Maximus, and which bore no very respectable character, some remains may still be traced against the palace walls, in the form of low brick arches, built up with modern doors in them. They are exactly on the left of the road in coming from Rome to the ruins of Nero's Golden House.

It was in these shops that the conflagration began, in the reign of Nero,* that consumed ten out of fourteen quarters of the city, and was finally extinguished at the base of the Esquiline. It was in his own private theatre on that Mount, that Nero, during the progress of the flames, chanted the conflagration of Troy.†

We lingered for a long time on this noble terrace; and though its sides and extremity are wholly unguarded, its immense breadth is a sufficient safeguard, even against the feeling of insecurity. The polished myrtle, the laurustinus in full flower, the young bloom of the scorpion sena, and the gigantic leaves of the "everlasting aloe," flourish in wild profusion over these ruins.

This terrace commands a prospect that I could gaze at for ever with undiminished interest. The ruins of Rome amidst her ancient hills—the fallen grandeur of the Colosseum—the deserted shores of the Tiber—the wild and waste extent of the Campagna, marked with the long lines

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* Openly raised by his command. Vide Tacitus, lib. xv. and Suet. 38.

† Tacitus, Ann. lib. xv. Suetonius, Life of Nero, 38. It would appear, that even then, Nero's Palace extended from the Palatine to the Esquiline Hill; for Tacitus says, that when the conflagration began, Nero was at Antium, and never returned to the city till he heard the fire had advanced to that part of his house which filled the space between the Palace (on the Palatine) and the gardens of Mecænas (on the Esquiline.) He adds, "that it was not till the sixth day that the conflagration was stopped at the foot of Mount Esquiline by pulling down an immense number of buildings. But the fire broke out with fresh violence in different places; whence it was conjectured that Nero was resolved upon building a new city, and calling it by his name. Of the fourteen quarters into which Rome was divided, four were still entire, three in utter ruin, and in the seven others, a few half-burnt houses were only to be seen."

of broken aqueducts and mouldering tombs—the amphitheatre of mountains which sweep round the plain of Latium—every object that meets our view recalls to us the times that are fled.

All the distant and romantic events of history are realized by the presence of the scenes in which they are acted; the long interval of ages is at once annihilated, and we seem to live, and move, and think, with those who have gone before us. Here, far from every sound and sight of man, and surrounded only by the ruined monuments of ancient greatness, I have indeed felt, that it is at Rome only we live more in the past than in the present.

The prodigious accumulation of the ruins of all ages which cover the wide extent of the Palatine itself, is not the least striking of the features of the scene. It almost seems, from the destruction which has overwhelmed every modern erection on this hill, as if the Genius of Rome, impatient at the profanation of her ancient seat, had struck them with her withering hand, and doomed all the works of man to perish here.

The distant view of the dome of St. Peter's recalled us from the high heroic visions of early days, to a chapter in the history of mankind fraught with wonder and instruction; and as, standing on these ruins which once contained the despot whom all the nations of the earth obeyed and worshipped—we looked to the Vatican, whose now innocuous thunders once shook Europe and hurled monarchs from their thrones—we thought of the singular destiny of a city that had successively been the temporal and the spiritual tyrant of the world; and almost anticipated the day when that papal, like this imperial palace, would lie in ruins, and the dominion of the popes, like that of the emperors, be at an end for ever.

"Rome was the whole world—all the world was Rome."

But what is it now? Where is the Queen of Nations?

"Thou stranger, which for Rome in Rome here seek'st,
And naught of Rome in Rome perceiv'st at all,
Those same old walls—old arches which thou seest,
Old palaces—is that which Rome men call.

Behold what wreck, what ruin, and what waste,
And how that she, which with her mighty power
Tamed all the world, hath tamed herself at last,
The prey of Time which all things doth devour."

"Rome, living, was the world's sole ornament,
And, dead, is now the world's sole monument."*

We have now traced the immense mass of the broken and scattered ruins that overspread the deserted surface of the Palatine, like the skeleton of a mighty giant. Notwithstanding the ages that have passed since their erection, it is not their existence, but their destruction, that excites our amazement. So solid is their structure, that no common fate could have overwhelmed them thus, and it has evidently been the work, not of time; but of violence. Even now, broken and ruined as they are—if their final fall be not accelerated by the convulsions of nature, or the labours of man—they bid fair to stand, while a long series of generations shall visit them and pass away into dust.

LETTER XV.

THE CAPITOL.

How I hate antiquaries. They destroy all one's happy illusions and delightful dreams, and leave one nothing in return but dismal doubts and cold uncertainties.

"When ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise;" but wise I must be, though sadly against my will; and yet, after hearing and comparing all the contradictory opinions of the most famous of these stupid people—after listening to more dry discussions, and poring over more musty old books, than my ears and eyes can well endure; the end of all my knowledge is, that, like the Athenian sage, I

* Vide Ruins of Rome, in Spenser's Poems.

know that I know nothing, and what is worse, I suspect that nothing is to be known: nothing at least that I want to know, can they tell me; and what they have to teach, I do not wish to learn. They have carefully grubbed up all the rubbish of antiquity, but lost the gems: and the reproach that was made to one of the tribe applies justly to all—

> "O fie! quoth Time to Thomas Hearne,
> "Whatever I forget, you learn.

Antiquarianism seems to me to be the mere art of guessing,—the genuine science of puzzling. It begins and ends in pure supposition. It is the region of uncertainty —the atmosphere of mist—and "shadows, clouds, and darkness rest upon it." It is like a labyrinth, the farther you go into it, the more you are bewildered; and its professors, who pretend to be your guides through its mazes, only lead you farther astray. They can perplex, but they cannot clear up; they can tell you what a thing is not, but not what it is. If to doubt be philosophical, then are they the greatest of philosophers, for they never do any thing else; and yet their credulity is at times even more extraordinary than their skepticism. Would you believe that one of them gave me a long account of the revolutions of Latium, for about a thousand years before Romulus, as true history! But this was even surpassed by the piece of information imparted to me, with profound gravity, by a learned, and exceedingly solemn amateur antiquary, that the Sicuti, a people of Illyrium, had possession of the Capitoline Hill several centuries before the time of the Aborigines! This was no *lapsus linguæ;* for, in answer to my reiterated inquiries, he kindly repeated the information again and again.

Would you like to have any more of their lucubrations? Will it be any satisfaction to you to know, that, at the time old Janus lived on Mons Janiculus, Saturn inhabited the Capitoline Hill, then called Saturnius; and that they were in the constant habit of fighting with each other in the most neighbourly manner possible, until at last Saturn, at the head of an army of Cretans, got the better

of Janus, and his Aborigines, and reigned unmolested over both hills?

About the time these old gods were carrying on these martial operations here, I suppose Pales, the Goddess of Sheep, might be pastorally tending her flocks on the neighbouring Palatine, and Hercules slaying Cacus on the Aventine. Indeed, if we go back to what, to the utter scandal of the antiquaries, I call the fabulous history of these hills, we shall find the days of Romulus and his Rome comparatively quite recent. We shall hear of the Sicani, a body of Spanish people, who had possession of the Palatine, but who being molested by some other people, went away in a pet to Sicily, and made room for Evander and a colony of Arcadians, who did not, however, come to inhabit it for several centuries afterwards —the precise number of which is not very accurately ascertained. We shall, if we have patience, be entertained with long histories of a variety of people, cities, wars, and revolutions, both before and after the time of Janus and Saturn,—with catalogues of kings, whose existence is not very certain—and with accounts of more dynasties, catastrophes, battles, and tumults, than you, I am sure, could be brought to listen to. I will, therefore, spare you the recital of all this farrago, which I was doomed to endure; and, referring you to Virgil *for* all the traditional history of the Romans that is worth attending to, I will at once generously bring you down to the period when Æneas and his Trojans built Lavinium near the sea, (about twenty miles south of Rome,) and his son Ascanius founded Alba Longa, the capital of Latium, on the sloping side of the Alban Mount, the site of which can be traced to this day—by antiquarian eyes,—although the city was razed to the ground by Tullus Hostilius.

It was—nobody knows how many centuries after this—that Rome was built on the Palatine; and one of the first cares of its warlike founder, was to protect his infant city by a fortress on the Capitoline Hill. But he seemed to have been more solicitous for its safety than its sanctity; for it does not appear that he erected any temple for the worship of the gods, until, after having defeated in single combat Acron, King of the Ceninensians, a Sabine peo-

ple, who are supposed to have come from Monte Celi near Tivoli; he made a trophy of the arms of his defeated royal antagonist, slung them on an oak, and bore them in triumph, with his head crowned with laurel, to the Capitol Hill, where he dedicated these *opima spolia* to Jupiter Feretrius, in whose honour he built a temple, the most ancient of Rome.*

It was in the interval between the Rape of the Sabines, and the union with that nation, that this event happened. This temple, which was afterwards enlarged by Ancus Martius,† and rebuilt by Augustus, with a portico of six columns in front, is generally believed to have stood on the Tarpeian Rock—which had not then received the name it has since borne for nearly three thousand years. Tarpeia's treachery has procured her immortality; but for that, her name would not have been given to this hill, and we should never have heard of her.

When the Sabines had got possession of the citadel by her treason, and when they fought with the Romans, with all the rancour of deadly hatred and revenge, in the plain between the hills, which was afterwards the Forum;—in the moment of desperate conflict, the Romans were driven back even to the gate of their city, where their leader, after vainly endeavouring to rally them, threw up his hands to heaven, and called on the Omnipotent Jove to stop their flight. They instantly wheeled round, and in turn repulsed the Sabines; and on the spot where his prayer was granted, Romulus vowed a temple to Jupiter Stator, who was ever afterwards adored as the god that prevented the Romans from flying from their enemies.‡

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* Plutarch's Life of Romulus. Livy, book i. chap. 10.—His example was ever afterwards religiously followed by every victorious Roman general, who killed with his own hand the king or leader of the enemy's troops; but, as these were few, I believe only two other instances of the *opima spolia* being offered up in the Temple of Feretrian Jove occurred during the whole course of the Republic; and these were by Cornelius Cossus and Claudius Marcellus.

† Livy, book i. chap. 33.

‡ From a passage in Livy, it would appear, that this temple was not built till the year of Rome 458, "when M. Attilius Regulus, in a battle against the Samnites, vowed a temple to Jupiter Stator, as Romulus had formerly done. But as *hitherto there had only been a place marked out*

In these days the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus was not built. It was vowed to Jupiter Optimus Maximus by the first Tarquin,* by whom the foundation was laid, and it was finished by Tarquinius Superbus, who enriched it with the spoils of Suessa Pometia.† It was in digging the foundations of this temple that a human head was found, which the Augurs declared to be emblematical of future empire; and in consequence, the hill which had been originally called *Saturnius*, and then *Tarpeia*, was now christened *Capitolius*, *Caput Olius*. because this head, it seems, belonged to somebody called Tolius, or Olius;‡ though how they knew the man's name from his skull, I never could discover.

After this period, no other part of the hill, except the precipitous rock down which malefactors were thrown, retained the name of the treacherous Tarpeia.‖ Though it is certain that it was on the western side of the Capitoline Hill, it would be vain now to inquire where was the precise spot of execution;—whether Manlius was hurled down that part of the precipice at the extremity of Monte Caprino, or that behind the Palazzo de' Conservatori. There is still height enough in either, whatever you may have heard to the contrary, to make the punishment both tremendous and fatal; although not only have the assaults of time, war, and violence, but the very convulsions of nature, contributed to lower it; for repeated earthquakes have shattered the friable tufo of which it is composed, and large fragments of it fell as late as the middle of the fifteenth century.

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and consecrated for that temple, the Commonwealth being a second time under the obligation of that vow, a regard for religion induced the Senate to order the temple itself to be erected this year."—Dec. I. lib. x. cap. 37. And yet previous mention is frequently made of this temple in history, as if actually built; for instance, at the death of Tarquinius Priscus.—Livy, lib. i. cap. 41. I cannot reconcile this inconsistency.

* Livy, lib. i. cap. 38.

† A city of Latium 50 miles south of Rome. Vide Tacitus, Hist. lib. iii. cap. 71.

‡ Livy, ibid.

‖ Vide Plutarch's Life of Romulus, p. 90. Langhorne's Translation, ninth edition.

The fall of these masses has diminished the elevation in two ways—by lowering the actual height, and filling up the base, to which the ruins of the overthrown buildings that once stood upon it, have materially contributed. Still, the average of various measurements and computations of its present elevation makes it above sixty feet; nor do I think it over-rated.* Certainly, those who have maintained there would be no danger in leaping from its summit, would not, I imagine, be bold enough to try the experiment themselves.

A mean filthy passage now leads to an old wooden door, through which, after much knocking, we got admittance, and stood

> "On the Tarpeian rock, the citadel
> Of great and glorious Rome, Queen of the Earth,
> So far renown'd, and with the spoils enriched
> Of Nations."†

Upon the Tarpeian Rock, and on the site of the House of Manlius Capitolinus, which was razed to the ground after his execution, was built the temple of *Juno Moneta*, or the mint; where the coins, dies, weights, and stamps were kept. Here, too, was the *Casa Romuli*, originally the straw roofed cottage of Tatius the Sabine king, which, after his murder, passed into the possession of Romulus, and was therefore preserved with that religious veneration which even to the latest times was paid in Rome to every thing that related to its deified founder.‡

Some remains of the ancient fortifications of the Capitol are still to be seen on this side of the hill. We went up a flight of steps to Monte Caprino, as it is now called, and entered one or two dirty cottages, where we saw walls of extraordinary solidity, which have apparently formed the interior of one of the towers of the Citadel. They are

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* Probably criminals were thrown from the summit of the Arx or Citadel, the lofty walls of which were founded on the Tarpeian Rock; consequently the height must have been much greater than that of the precipice itself.

† Paradise Regained.

‡ Seneca. Helv. 9.

built of large blocks of peperin stone,* and are supposed to be of the age of Camillus ; and consequently, with the exception of the Cloaca Maxima, to which they bear a strong resemblance, the most ancient of all the remains of antiquity at Rome. This eminence is generally believed to have been once occupied by the Temple of Jupiter Feretrius,—and the eastern summit of the hill, by that of Jupiter Capitolinus ; but their respective situations have lately been the subject of much discussion. For my part, the question of which temple occupied which summit, is one I shall not enter upon ; but leaving it to the antiquaries—not to decide, for I am perfectly certain they will never decide any thing—but to dispute—I shall content myself with adhering to the popular belief entertained during nearly a thousand years, that Ara Cœli stands upon the site of Capitoline Jove. Indeed, if it fronted to the south,† and looked to the Forum and the Aventine,‡ I see no other spot that could combine these requisites. Be this as it may, this temple was one of the largest and most splendid of the ancient world ; but its triple porticos, its columns of precious marbles, its roof of burnished gold, its statues of ivory,‖ and all its other gorgeous wonders, I shall pass over unnoticed. It had, besides the altar of Jupiter, a small ædicola, or chapel, on each side, dedicated to Juno and Minerva ; and ancient medals have been published representing the three deities within this temple. It also contained the altar of the God Terminus—which there was no means of getting rid of; for when Tarquin was about to build this temple, and all the other gods who had previously had possession of its proposed site, had signified through the Augurs their willingness to resign in favour of Capitoline Jove, this one was refractory, and pertinaciously retained his old station ; a fit of obstinacy that was construed

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* This peperin stone, of which the walls of Servius Tullius and all the earlier works of Rome were built, is an aggregate of soft texture, and apparently of volcanic origin. After the Romans extended their conquests to Tibur (Tivoli,) they generally made use of the Tiburtine stone, which, for architectural purposes, is probably the most durable and the most beautiful in the world.

† Plutarch. ‡ Dion. Halicarnassus.

‖ Vide the description of it by Pliny and Dion. Halicarnassus.

as prophetical of the eternal duration of Rome.* It was indispensable to the worship of this deity that his temples should be uncovered, so that it is supposed there must always have been an opening in the roof above his altar. The statue of Jupiter Capitolinus was remarkable for the crown of oak which wreathed his brows, and for the spear, instead of sceptre, which he bore in his hand.†

This temple, which was rebuilt by Sylla, by Vespasian, and again, for the last time, by Domitian, was despoiled of its treasures by Genseric, King of the Vandals.

At the base of the modern ascent to the capitol, are placed two ancient Egyptian lions of basalt, from the noses of which a small stream of water issues. These are the lions that Madame de Stael adduces as a proof that the Egyptians excelled all other nations in the sculpture of animals. It may be so, but I thought them decidedly inferior to the inimitable lions of Canova, which we had just been admiring on the tomb of one of the Popes in St. Peter's ; and I am persuaded, that if the latter had not the unpardonable fault of being modern,—if they had only luckily been found buried under ground, and broken into a reasonable number of pieces, we should never have heard an end of their praises.

At the top of the ascent are two ancient colossal statues of Grecian marble, which, I make no doubt, may be very fine, and are unquestionably very large, but which, in my humble opinion, are supremely ugly. They represent Caius and Lucius, the grandsons and adopted sons of Augustus, under the semblance of Castor and Pollux,‡ standing in twin ugliness by the side of their horses, which, by the way, are out of all proportion with their own huge dimensions.

Upon the balustrade, which extends from the top of the staircase, on either side along the whole breadth of the

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* Vide Livy, lib. i. cap. 55. and Dion. Halicarnassus.

† It appears so in an ancient medal.

‡ It is a curious proof of the fallacy of the judgment even of the best critics of the arts, that Winkelman considered these statues, which are now recognised as portraits of the age of Augustus, to be works of Hegesias, who lived before Phidias !—Vide Hist. dell'Art. lib. vi. c. 1. § 25.

Piazza, are erected some trumpery statues of the sons of Constantine, an ancient Roman mile-stone, a modern one made in imitation of it, and some sculptured trophies of arms, commonly called the trophies of Marius, erected to him, after his victory over the Cimbri and Teutoni, but conjectured by the learned, from their style, to be of the age of Trajan, and commemorative of his victories over the Dacians.

Doctors differ, however, and Winkelman* calls them trophies of Domitian, and maintains, that beneath them, in the *Castellum* of Water of the Julian Aqueduct, where they were found, there was an inscription, stating that a freed man of that emperor had erected these trophies in honour of his triumphs over the Dacians. Now, as Domitian never went near the Dacians, and his armies experienced signal defeats in that expedition, one can scarcely conceive that even an imperial sycophant would venture to administer such a preposterous dose of flattery. Other antiquaries, perhaps esteeming this reported inscription to be somewhat apocryphal, have, in despite of it, pronounced these much disputed symbols to be Trophies of Augustus, erected to him by Agrippa, on the Aqueduct he built, and which, it is related, he was fond of embellishing with sculpture. For my part, I blush to entertain so heterodox an opinion; but I am disposed to think them just what they are called, the Trophies of Marius. That these Trophies, which were destroyed by Sylla, were restored by Cæsar, and placed in the capitol, is upon record;† and though these were found upon the Aqueduct of the Julian water, yet, as it was a work of that age, I think the conclusion by no means unreasonable. Besides, the name they have always vulgarly borne (in despite of the antiquaries,) is in its favour; for I can conceive no imaginable reason for their having been called the Trophies of Marius, except that they really were such; even the neighbourhood retained the name of *Cimbri* to a very late period. At the same time, to speak the truth, I do

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* Storia dell'Arte, lib. vi. c. 6.

† Plutarch and Suetonius, Lives of Julius Cæsar, (xi.)

not think them worth all the discussions and dissertations that have been made—and that I am making about them.

The small modern square, now enclosed by the three palaces—that of the Senator, the Conservatori, and the Statue Gallery,—in the centre of which stands the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius, is supposed reasonably enough, to have been the *Intermontium;* for it lies between the two mounts of the Capitol Hill, which were crowned by the Temples of the two Jupiters. In the *Intermontium* stood the *Zelum*, or asylum, consecrated by Romulus to the protection of outlaws. It is supposed to have been protected by the altar of *Vejovis*, which, being interpreted, means, it seems, the young or beardless, or else the wicked Jupiter,* whose statue had three darts in its hand. The fugitives who took refuge here, and placed their hand upon its sacred stone, were safe, whatever might have been their crimes.† They were not admitted into the walls of Rome, which then only encircled the Palatine, but lived upon this hill. This altar was surrounded with a grove,—but a magnificent name must not mislead us—and few indeed must have been the trees that could have found space to have grown here. Perhaps the changes of time, and the fall of masses of rock from its summit, may have materially diminished the surface of this hill: but certainly we should now be puzzled to find room for all the temples of the various Fortunes,—of Faith, Opis, Hercules, Ceres, and other multifarious deities;—for the Triumphal Arch of Scipio Africanus, erected by himself before his departure for Asia to serve under his brother as Lieutenant, and adorned with two horses and seven gilded statues, among which was the famous statue of Aristides teaching a youth to play upon the lyre;—for the

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* Gell. 5. 13.

† At a later period, the statues of the emperors were inviolable sanctuaries, from which even the worst of criminals could not be torn. In like manner, the altars of Christianity have been converted—or, I should say, perverted—into a protection towards the very crimes they were raised to banish from the world. It may indeed be observed, that not only the Catholic sanctuaries, but most of the usages of that church, are of Pagan origin.

Arch of Nero, erected in honour of the *defeat* his army sustained in Armenia,* on which the bronze, *alias* copper horses, that have made so many journeys to and fro between Constantinople and Venice, and Venice and Paris, are foolishly said to have stood;†—for the Curia Calabra, where the inferior priests, after making their observations on the new moon, used to convene the people to acquaint them when the ides and nones would fall,—for the Public Portico—and for the endless catalogue of buildings of all kinds, that antiquaries assign to this little spot. It is most probable, however, that many of them succeeded to each other, and clearly impossible that the whole could ever have stood at once upon this hill.

Beneath the Senator's Palace, or rather forming the lower part of its walls, are considerable remains of an ancient edifice, built of large square blocks of peperin stone, which are distinctly visible both on its south and west sides. It is generally supposed to have been the *Tabularium*, where the laws and public records were suspended on tablets of bronze; not less than three thousand of which are said to have been destroyed in the conflagration which ensued during the bloody conflict that took place in the Capitol between the parties of Vitellius and Vespasian.‡ The walls of the *Tabularium* itself, however, the antiquaries seemed to think, escaped the flames, (though the destruction they caused must have been tolerably serious, when Vespasian thought it neces-

* Nero was resolved to have a Triumphal Arch; so began it before he began to fight, and finished it, in spite of the signal discomfiture of his arms. Tacitus, Ann. lib. xv. c. 18.

† There is not a shadow of probability to favour the assertion. From a document in the Library of Venice, it would appear that these renowned "Grecian" horses were cast in the low ages in the isle of Chios. The authenticity of this statement is, however, warmly disputed. Judging from the style of sculpture, I should not have supposed they could be a work of the meridian of art; but Winkelman never expresses a doubt of their antiquity. They are of copper, not of bronze, and have been gilt.

‡ Vespasian, however, took great pains to repair the loss, as far as it was possible, by causing search to be made through all the libraries and cities, both of the eastern and western world, for copies of them, "and thus again furnished a collection of ancient records, in which were contained the decrees of the Senate almost from the building of the city; and also of the acts of the Comitia, relative to the alliances, treaties, and privileges granted to any nation or individual."—Vide Suetonius.

sary to set the example of clearing away the rubbish, by carrying off a part of it on his own shoulder,*) and they consider those we now see to be of the age of Sylla, by whom the *Tabularium* was built.

When we visited the interior of this ancient building, one of the Senator's servants conducted us down long flights of stairs from the palace, and through cold and dirty passages, to the remains of an arched corridor of considerable extent, and of a noble and solid style of architecture, not unlike that of the Colosseum; and, for my own part, I should think its pretensions to higher antiquity very dubious, and that this—whatever it may be—like the rest of the buildings of the Capitol, was in all probability rebuilt by Vespasian.

The antiquaries have been so much puzzled to accommodate all the buildings which stood here with sufficient room, that they have been obliged to pile one upon the top of another—Pelion upon Ossa,—and some of them say this was the Public Portico; that the *Tabularium* was built above it; and that above the *Tabularium* stood the *Athenæum* and Public Library, instituted by Hadrian. But this is mere conjecture.

Such was once the Capitoline Hill. And when we think of its invulnerable Citadel, its vanished temples, its triumphal arches, its splendid porticos, its golden statues, and all its unparalleled, but forgotten splendours,—it is indeed a contrast to look round on the scattered ruins of that seat of empire which awed the world,—to behold a convent of barefooted friars usurping the proud Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus,—a few miserable hovels crowning the Tarpeian rock,—and the palace of a modern Roman Patrician,† occupying the site of the house of Ovid and the School of Philosophers.

The Senator's Palace—but you have heard so much of the Senator's Palace, that perhaps you would like to hear

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* Suetonius, Life of Vespasian, 8.

† The Palazzo Caffarelli,—which has been supposed to fill the ancient site of the above-mentioned buildings. It is much more certain, however, that in its stables, cellars, and gardens, are considerable remains of the ancient fortifications of the Citadel.

something of the Senator; and the images of Cato, and Cicero, and Brutus, and the Gracchi, rushing upon your mind, you will perhaps expect that this last of Roman Senators should unite their virtues.

Alas! this Senator without a Senate—this Judge without the power of doing justice—this Ruler without rule—is a foreign Italian of noble birth, appointed by the Pope to bear that empty name. He is a pageant, a phantom, a jest; a slave without power, or even pride, that can hear himself saluted "the Roman Senator," without feeling the bitter mockery of such a name!

This office has existed more than five hundred years. When the powerful eloquence of Arnold of Brescia—the earliest, and perhaps the most enlightened and irreproachable of all the champions of civil and religious liberty—had shot a gleam of promise on the Seven Hills, even amidst the darkness of the twelfth century, Rome for a moment saw her ancient rights restored. But her liberty was an accident; her slavery a habit. And when, by the decree of an English pontiff,* and a barbarian monarch†—the apostle and the martyr of freedom had expiated his heresy at the stake, and his ashes were scattered in the Tiber—the Roman Senate, which he had roused into life and action, after the slumber of ages, and which in him seemed to lose its soul—divided, distracted, and torn with dissensions, delegated its power to one individual, annually elected, and named the Senator, whose privileges the Pope was compelled to acknowledge. Not a Roman, however, was found, who did not abuse the trust; and it was therefore decreed, that aliens from a distant state should alone be appointed, and such only are even now eligible to this office. A Roman cannot be a Roman Senator; but foreign princes, and even the popes themselves, have filled the post. The election, from being annual and popular, soon became permanent and arbitrary. The dignity was held for life—the authority was gradually limited, and finally annulled—and the office of Roman Senator soon ceased to be any thing but a name.

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* Adrian IV. the only English Pope. † Frederick Barbarossa.

The internal administration of the city is regulated by the governor of Rome, an officer appointed by the pope, and removable at pleasure, who rules with arbitrary authority.

Near the base of the Capitoline Hill, and beneath the Church of S. Pieto, in Carcere, are the Tullian, or Mamertine Prisons, or at least all that now remain of them. They were originally begun by Ancus Martius, and finished by Servius Tullius, who is said to have built or excavated the deepest of the dungeons, and they were considerably enlarged in succeeding times. It was to these dungeons that the accomplices of Catiline, when, by the effects of Cicero's accusing eloquence, they were condemned to immediate death, were conducted from the Senate-house through the Forum, and strangled. It was here, too, that Jugurtha perished of hunger; that Sejanus, that sport of fortune, met the just punishment of his crimes in an ignominious death,* and that Perseus, the captive King of Macedonia, lingered in hopeless imprisonment: though, towards the close of his life, he was removed, at the intercession of his humane conqueror, to a less horrible abode.†

There are still two dungeons in these prisons, an upper and a lower one, to which, in Roman times, criminals were lowered through a round hole, called *Robus*,‡ (probably because made in solid oak,) and left to perish. The stairs by which we descend at present, are modern. In the deepest of these dungeons, it is said St. Peter was imprisoned by command of Nero. The pillar he was chained to is still shown, and so also is a miraculous spring of water, which sprung forth at the apostle's command when he was going to baptize the forty converted jailers. The present *custode* of this dungeon thinks he triumphantly refutes all the cavils of skepticism with respect to its miraculous origin, when he offers this water to you to taste of, and assures you it is real water,

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* Sallust. de Bel. Jugurt.
† To Alba. Plutarch's Life of Paulus Æmilius.
‡ Nibby. Foro. Romano. P. 129.

"*acqua vera.*" He never fails, too, to make you observe a hole in the wall of the staircase, which he says is the impression of the apostle's head when the jailer brutally drove it against the wall. When it was shown to us, a wicked wit of the party irreverently observed, that this only proved St. Peter's head to be the thicker of the two.

There is nothing but tradition to prove the imprisonment of St. Peter here; and, though by no means improbable, those who have been long at Rome will not be inclined to give much weight to such unsupported legends. The place of the apostle's martyrdom is pointed out at San Pietro in Montorio; and the splendid dome of St. Peter's now rises above his supposed tomb.

Though St. Paul is said to have been imprisoned in the same dungeon, no miracles of his working are recorded.*

The entrance to the Mamertine prisons was anciently at the upper story and at the side. A staircase from the Forum, connected with the door of the prisons by a bridge, led up to it, and was known by the name of the *Scalæ Gemoniæ,* the Stair of Groans. The corpses of the criminals who had been executed in the dungeons were publicly exposed upon this bridge, or ignominiously hurled from it into the Forum. These stairs only conducted to the prisons; they did not lead to the Capitol, to which there were three ascents, two for foot passengers, and one (the *Via Sacra Clivus Capitolini*) for the triumphal cars which bore the conquerors to the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. This last, after passing beneath the Arch of Septimius Severus in the Forum, turned to the left, and ascended to the summit of the hill—nobody knows exactly how; but that it did ascend, (and the cars upon it) is an historical fact that can admit of no dispute. I shall perhaps return to this subject when I get you down into the Forum. Of the other two ascents, one was the Cen-

* These cells are no longer used as prisons; but beneath a part of the Senator's Palace there is a jail, the wretched inmates of which, crowding against the iron bars of their windows, vociferously assail the unfortunate stranger who may stop to admire Marcus Aurelius and the noble horse, with noisy importunities for *baiocchi.*

tus Gradus, consisting of a hundred or more steep steps, on the west side of the hill, up the face of the Tarpeian Rock, which is supposed to have commenced nearly from the present site of the Piazza Montanara ;* and the other, the *Clivus Asyli*, is believed to have been from the Forum to the sacred grove and altar of Romulus, nearly in the same situation as the present foot-way, by the Scala Cordonata, from the Forum to the Piazza di Campodoglio. Thus all the three ascents of the Palatine were extremely near each other, being on the south or west sides of the hill. There was no ascent whatever on the north, nor, it is believed, on the east side.

I must long since have exhausted your patience with this tedious account of the Capitol; but who can tread its soil without seeking to recall to memory or imagination what it once was? Who can gaze, even upon one solitary stone of the citadel of Republican Rome, without endeavouring to penetrate the obscurity of time, and catch even a faint uncertain glimpse of that sacred seat of the virtues and the liberties that have fled for ever?

Yes! long ages of ruin have since rolled away—deep degradation has covered it, and the darkness of oblivion has settled upon it—and yet, does not the light that once shone here, still shed its brightness through the world?

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* Livy, (lib. viii.) places it at the Forum Olitorium, on the site of which the Piazza Montanara is generally supposed to stand.

LETTER XVI.

THE AVENTINE.

We spent this morning in visiting the Aventine, the most western of the Seven Hills. It is divided from the Palatine by the valley of the Circus Maximus, and round its northern base the Tiber flows. It is said to have derived its name from Aventinus, a king of Alba, who was buried here in a laurel grove, which was preserved to a very late period upon this mount.*

It was added to Rome, as I have already mentioned, by Ancus Martius, and peopled by the captive inhabitants of Politorium, Tellena, and Ficana, three Latin villages at a short distance from Rome, which he destroyed. The whole, or at least the greater part of this Mount, must have been included in the wall of Servius Tullius. Some antiquaries, indeed, have chosen to assert, that it was first included in the walls of Rome by the Emperor Claudius, —by whom, indeed, it was first included in the *Pomœrium*, when he extended its consecrated circle; but no authority can be adduced in support of their opinions, and an irresistible weight of evidence can be brought against it.† Besides, how, in the name of common sense, could Rome be the city of the Seven Hills, if it was confined to six?‡

In the early ages of Rome, indeed, it is certain that the whole neither of the Esquiline nor Aventine hills was inhabited. We read in Livy of nightly meetings of the disaffected§ being held upon the former, to the great alarm

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* Pliny, in his Nat. Hist. mentions the *Laureto*, on the Aventine. Laurel groves were considered among the ancients a protection from lightning and pestilence.

† Livy, book i. chap. 33.—Dionysius Halicarnassus, ii. iii. and iv.; and Strabo, book v. Vide Nardini, lib. i. cap. 5. for a crowd of authorities, and a long dissertation in proof of it.

‡ Septemque una sibi muro circumdabit arces.—Virgil, lib. vi. ver. 784.

§ Livy, lib. ii. cap. 28.

of the Senate ; and the two armies that joined in rebellion against the tyranny of the Decemvirs, encamped upon the latter.* But from the prodigious extent of the Aventine, which is computed by Dionysius Halicarnassus to be three miles in circumference, it is not surprising that there was abundant room for encampments at that early period.

The Aventine has two distinct summits, and indeed, it might almost be called two hills, for they are divided by a valley ; but I do not find that they were ever distinguished by different names. Near the base of the most southern of its heights, are the gigantic ruins of the Baths of Caracalla ; but it is the northern summit which overhangs the river, that we must now ascend. It was this that Remus chose for the site of his inauspicious augury, and which, long before that period, was famed for the exploits of Hercules, who pursued the robber Cacus to his den on this mount. The entrance to this cave, did not, it seems, overhang the river ; and indeed it would have been utterly impossible for Cacus, or any other person, to have dragged the oxen up this precipice backwards by their tails.† As it was, he must have had his own troubles in pulling them in this manner, all the way from the banks of the river where they were grazing,‡ to that part of the hill facing the Palatine where the opening of his den was situated. Hercules, as soon as he awoke, was guided to the place by their lowings ; and, after vainly endeavouring to force open the mouth of the cave, went round to the side that overlooks the river, hurled down a rock that formed the back of it, and opened for himself a passage to his revenge.

But being *modestly* of opinion that Virgil tells the story rather better than I do, I will refer you to him.

In consequence of this *invention* of breaking open the cavern, Hercules, who piously ascribed it to Jove, dedicated an altar to Jupiter the *Inventor*, at the foot of the hill, near the river, and raised another at the same time to himself, under the name of Hercules the Victorious.

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* Livy, lib. iii. cap. 50. † Vide Livy, lib. i. cap. 7. ‡ Virgil, lib. viii.

This must not be confounded with the *Ara Maxima*, or great altar, which was dedicated to Hercules by his contemporary, Evander, at the base of the north-western corner of the Palatine Hill; was enclosed by Romulus within the line of his furrow; and was venerated from the earliest to the latest period of Roman story.

The Altar of the Elician Jove, (*Jovis Elicii*) which stood upon the Aventine Hill, was erected by Numa, in order to draw down upon earth the King of Heaven, invisible in the terrors of his lightnings and thunderbolts. The process of accomplishing this, Numa learnt from a drunken Faun, or, according to some authorities, from the rural deities *Faunus* and *Picus*, whom he had contrived to intoxicate by mixing the waters of the fountain on the Aventine, which they frequented, with wine and honey; and having caught them in this situation, he tied them with cords, in spite of their Porteus power of transformation, till they grew sober, and let him into the secret.*

No traces of this famed or fabled brook, which Numa and the Fauns loved to haunt on this mount, can now be discerned. But the Cave of Cacus, we are gravely informed, is still extant on the steep side of the Aventine that overhangs the Tiber; and some of our active friends scrambled about in search of it among the thorns and brushwood that fringe its perpendicular bank, at the imminent peril of breaking their necks, and to the actual demolition of their clothes. But though they found holes in abundance, they never met with any that could contain a single ox, or that, by any stretch of courtesy, could be dignified with the name of a cave; so that the abode of Cacus, as far as I know, remains undiscovered to this day.

There are now no traces of the *Clivis Publicii*,† the ancient ascent of Mount Aventine.

A modern road, bounded by two high walls, led us to

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* Vide Ovid, Fast. ii. iii.; and Plutarch, in his Life of Numa, who is pleased to give us the receipt (consisting of a mixture of onions, human hairs, and five pilchards,) by which a mortal could thus control the Deity. He declares it to be in use "to this day;" but neither the inspired Numa, nor the drunken Fauns, had the wit to invent the charm discovered by Benjamin Franklin.

† Ovid, Fast. v.—Livy, lib. xx.

the summit, where we stopped at the Church of Santa Maria del Priorata, or rather at the adjacent unfurnished and desolate villa, which is now the property of the Braschi family. We ascended to the weed-covered *Belvedere*, at the top, and from thence gazed around us at the wide expanse of the Aventine, in all its loneliness and desolation. Of all the ancient and magnificent buildings that once covered it, not a trace remains—not a stone to mark where they have stood : nor is there any erection, even of modern days, that meets the eye, except some decaying churches and half-deserted convents.

At our feet rolled the Tiber, sullen and sad, whose "yellow" flood, a little higher up the stream, broke over the ruined pier of the *Pons Sublicius*, where the single valour of Horatius Cocles defended Rome from an army of her foes.

On the opposite shore, the long white line of the buildings of the Ripa Grande, the modern port of Rome, glittered in the sun. Behind it rose Monte Montorio, anciently Janiculus, with churches, convents, palaces, and fountains, hanging on its side, half concealed in wood; and at its base stood the majesty of St. Peter's.

On our right, the Palatine, covered with the dark gray ruins of the Palace of the Cæsars, hid from our view the Roman Forum ; and, far above the palaces, the cupolas, and the belfries of the Modern City, towered the storied hills that, all around, bounded the wide plain of the deserted Campagna.

Such was the prospect that met our view from the summit of one of the Seven Hills of Rome. At its base were anciently the Navalia, or Port of Rome, the Temple of Portumna, the Goddess of the Port, the Emporium, or magazines, the public granaries, storehouses for salt, &c. some remains of which are still to be seen on the hill side, on the left of the road leading to the Porta San Paola. In Republican days, the Aventine was the residence of Ennius, the first Poet of Rome ; and in the time of the Empire, it was dignified with the private house of Trajan, the best of her emperors.

On this mount stood the Temple, Portico, and Library

of Liberty,* the first public library in Rome. Here, too, in later times, was the Temple of Isis,† stigmatized by Juvenal ‡ as the scene of the most disgraceful licentiousness; but it is vain to go through a dry enumeration of all the vanished monuments of splendour which once crowded this deserted mount, since their very sight is wholly unknown. It is only certain, that on this part of it, (overlooking the Tiber,) stood the famous Temple of "the Common Diana," built by Servius Tullius; so called, because common to all the Latin tribes,—the Temple of Juno Regina, vowed by Camillus in the war with Veii, to which the statue of the goddess having first nodded assent, was transported with great pomp from the conquered city,§—and the Temple of the Bona Dea, which is said to have stood on the very spot where Remus took his inauspicious augury. Into that temple none but women might ever be admitted; into these mysteries none but women might ever be initiated. It was a sort of female free-masonry; and the rites practised there were as carefully concealed from the male sex in these days, as are the secrets of the lodge from the fairer part of creation in ours. It would seem, however, that certain rites of the mysterious goddess were solemnized in private houses, rather than in the temple of her worship, from the well-known circumstance of Clodius having entered the house of Julius Cæsar, disguised as a woman, on the night of their celebration; in consequence of which Cæsar divorced his wife, even while he declared his belief in her innocence, because "the wife of Cæsar might not even be suspected."

According to the suppositions of some antiquaries, the site of the Temple of the Bona Dea is now occupied by the Church of Santa Maria del Priorata. But this is vague conjecture.

It belonged, nay belongs, to the Knights of Malta; and, in more chivalric days, may have shared in the ancient splendour of their order. At present there is nothing to

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* Livy, lib. xix. and lib. iv.
† Mentioned by Victor.
‡ Juvenal, Sat. vi. ver. 489.
§ Vide Livy, Dec. i.

be seen in it except a marble Sarcophagus, adorned with a bass-relief of Pallas and the Muses, and probably destined for an ancient poet, but now possessed by the bones of some obscure old bishop. 'Tis somewhat strange, that this worthy prelate, who, I dare say, was never visited by the Goddess of Wisdom, or the Nine, in his life, should be thus surrounded with them in death. The adjoining gardens are kept with a degree of neatness, very rare out of England; and, even at this dead season of the year, the roses and wallflowers were in full bloom. Transported at the sight, I was in the midst of happiness and flower-beds, when the old gardener insisted upon my leaving them; and, in spite of my repugnance, conducted me, with determined resolution and obstinate silence, to the garden gate, out of which he turned me, as I conceived, with ignominy, because I had been pulling his violets; but I found I had only been thrust through it, in order to be surprised with a view of St. Peter's through the key-hole, so contrived as just to take in the whole elevation of that superb edifice, terminating a vista formed by two tall evergreen hedges, or vegetable walls.

The adjacent church of S. Alessio, with its deserted convent, has been purchased by the abdicated King of Spain, and part of it is now fitting up for the villa of his ex-Majesty, who has also repaired the church at his own expense, and supports four friars there to perform its duties.

Having walked through the old monarch's villa, which is handsomely fitted up, and examined the paintings, some of which are good, we were going away without entering the church, when one of the friars assured us, it possessed one of the most valuable pictures in the world. With eager eyes we hurried to see it; and when at last, after much preparation, the silken curtain that covered it was withdrawn, we beheld an old blackened piece of wood, on which something like a singed human face was visible, surmounted with a gilt crown, and all spotted over with golden stars. It was, we were informed, a likeness of the Virgin Mary, by no less a person than St. Luke himself,—and it must be acknowledged that he has not flattered her. Any thing so ugly I never before beheld.

I told the friar, that I hoped it was no offence to observe, that whatever might have been the virtues of the Evangelist, his talents in portrait painting were by no means great. The good father did not extol very highly its merits as a painting, but he enlarged much upon the miracles it had wrought, and seemed to think that "goodness was better than beauty." Like all the other pictures of the Madonna by the same hand—and they abound all over Italy—this is a miraculous image.

I think Lanzi, in his Storia Pittorica, mentions, that they are all supposed to have been executed early in the *secoli bassi* by one *Messer Luca*, a Greek painter, or a pupil of the Greeks, and they are evidently works of that barbarous school; and barbarously enough, are ascribed to the poor Evangelist.

We walked to the neighbouring Church of Santa Sabina, in order to see the ancient columns, the spoils of some temple of the Aventine, with which it is adorned. Two, of a singular sort of granite, stand at the entrance; and, in the interior, twenty-four fluted Corinthian columns of Grecian marble support the naves. This church is supposed to occupy the site of the Temple of Diana; and the discovery of a mosaic pavement, representing a chase of wild beasts, in the garden of the Dominican monks, to whom it belongs, would seem to confirm that opinion. This piece of mosaic is preserved above one of the doors in the Vatican. Two other mosaic pavements, representing similar chases, and a small Ephesian Diana in oriental alabaster, were found in an adjoining vineyard.

Some of the gentlemen of our party who were not yet contented with their thorny researches after Cacus's den, and thought, that although they could not climb up to it from below, they might yet perchance lower themselves down to it from above, made me (as they did not speak Italian themselves) put manifold questions to the monks touching its supposed situation;—but vain were our queries. When we asked them about Cacus, they talked to us about St. Dominic, who, as they gratuitously informed us, once lived here, and received letters from heaven, written by the Holy Trinity; and when we inquired about the Temple of Diana, they told us of Santa Sabina, who,

poor woman, it seems, was sewed up in a sack, with her waiting-maid, and thrown into the Tiber, because she would be a Christian.

I confess, I should not have been sorry to have heard that St. Dominic had been served so himself; for he, who was the cause of thousands perishing at the stake, himself deserved to suffer a death as cruel. You will remember, he was the founder of the Inquisition.

This church contains a very fine painting, the masterpiece of Sasso Ferrato; at least incomparably the best of his works that I have ever seen. It represents the Virgin giving alms to St. Dominic, and St. Catherine kneeling before the infant Redeemer.

Whilst some of the party were running after the Cave of Cacus, I lingered in the Church. The belief that it occupied the place of the famous Temple of Diana, had, from various circumstances, become strongly impressed upon my mind; nor could I think without emotion, that I stood amidst the columns, and on the site of that Temple, where, in the latest moments of his life, the younger Gracchus, in the bitterness of disappointed patriotism, offered up the prophetic prayer, "that the Roman people, for their base ingratitude, and their treacherous desertion of him, should be slaves for ever."*

Amply was that prayer fulfilled. As if from that moment, the Romans gradually passed beneath the yoke of despotism, never to be liberated. They have, indeed, known change of tyrants. In a long succession of ages, they have been the successive sport of Roman, Barbarian, Goth, Vandal, Pope, and Gaul; but Freedom which fled for ever with the latest sigh of Cicero, has revisited the Seven Hills no more; and glory and honour, and virtue and prosperity, one by one, have followed in her train. Long annals of tyranny—of unexampled vice, of misery and of crime,—polluted with still increasing luxury and moral turpitude—record the rapid progress of Rome's debasement. It seems to be the decree of Heaven, that liberty once lost, shall never be regained,—and that nations which have once fallen, shall rise no more.

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* Plutarch—Life of Caius Gracchus.

LETTER XVII.

THE CŒLIAN AND ESQUILINE HILLS.

The long extent of the Cœlian, the most southern of the Seven Hills, is crossed by the lofty arches of Nero's Aqueduct, in majestic masses of ruin. Its abandoned site seems now to be divided between the monks of St. Gregory, and of St. John and St. Paul, its sole inhabitants; and the chime of their convent bells, as it summons them to their often repeated prayers by day, or rouses them to their midnight vigils, is the only sound that breaks upon its deep silence and solitude. No human form appears, except that below the spreading palm-tree, or the dark cypress-grove that crowns the brow of the hill in the garden of St. John and St. Paul, the sable garments of a monk may at times be seen flitting by.

The precipitous banks that support the grounds or garden of this convent are encircled by nameless ruins of wide extent, consisting of arches, recesses, niches, and obscure passages, which vainly rouse curiosity, for their date, and author, and purpose, are alike unknown. Busy conjecture, indeed, has pointed them out as remains of the *Nymphæum* of the luxurious Nero; but this is scarcely in possibility. To whom they may have once belonged we know not, but oblivion has now made them wholly her own.

Beneath the tower of the convent are some remains of an ancient building, which seems to have been destroyed to make way for its Gothic height. These vestiges are evidently of the same age, style, and structure, as the Colosseum: they consist, like it, of an arched corridor, and another is said to be underneath it. They are supposed to have formed a part of the *Vivarium*.

The Church of San' Stefano Rotondo, the reputed Temple of Claudius, deserted, and mouldering to decay, crowns the western extremity of the Cœlian Hill; and upon a wide and grass covered space, that is called its most eastern summit, stands the great Basilica of St. John Lateran.

The monuments of modern superstition are here triumphant over the battlemented walls, the falling arches, and the ruined aqueducts of ancient greatness.

The Cœlian Mount, according to Dionysius Halicarnassus, was first added to Rome by Romulus,—according to Livy, by Tullus Hostilius,—according to Strabo, by Ancus Martius, and according to Tacitus, by Tarquinius Priscus. What the ancient historians of Rome differed about, we need not pretend to decide upon. All, however, agree that it formed a part of *Regal* Rome; and we must be content to remain in uncertainty as to which of the kings first occupied it. Livy, who gives its history the most circumstantially, informs us,* that after Tullus Hostilius had razed Alba to the ground, and brought its captive inhabitants to Rome, he built his own palace on this hill, and ever afterwards lived there. We, however, find no authority in this or any other account, for the belief still popularly entertained, that the *Curia Hostilia*, which he built to contain the Senate, augmented by the transported Alban families, stood here; on the contrary, it is well known always to have been in the Roman Forum.†

Tacitus‡ relates, that this mount was originally called *Querquetulanus*, from the groves of oak with which it was covered, and that it received the name of Cœlius from an Etruscan chief who led a body of Etruscans to the succour of Tarquinius Priscus; and afterwards, with his followers, inhabited a part of it, and of the adjacent low grounds. A street extending from the Roman Forum towards the Velabrum, and from them called the Tuscan street, was, however, the principal residence of these settlers. In the time of the empire, Tiberius commanded that it should be called Mount Augustus, because a statue of himself, in the house of a private citizen on this hill, had *miraculously* remained unconsumed in the midst of a conflagration; just as divers images of the Virgin Mary have, in times and places where great faith prevails, escaped the flames. The cause of this Pagan miracle was perhaps satisfactorily ac-

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*Lib. i. cap. 30. † Vide Livy, lib. i. cap. 47, 48.
‡ Tacitus, 4 Ann.

counted for by its effect—the elevation of the proprietor of this miraculous image to riches and honours. Whether a similar explanation might not be given of some of the Catholic miracles, I shall not presume to inquire. But though Tiberius could work miracles, dispose of the lives of unoffending millions, and, like Jove on earth, make the universe tremble at his nod, yet the power of this master of the world was insufficient to change the name of this insignificant speck on its surface, and, except to his own ear, the Cœlian was never called by any other appellation.

Deserted as it is now, it was once covered with sacred fanes, and monuments of magnificence.

Not to mention a little temple (Sacellum) in the sacred grove of oak, guarded by nymphs, which probably disappeared at a very early period, there was, upon this mount, a sacred tree, (Arbor Sancta,) dedicated to some god as a temple; a custom which, however druidical it may appear to us, would seem not to have been uncommon among the Romans.* There was also the Temple of Faunus, of Claudius, of Bacchus—of the Goddess Carnæ, built by the Elder Brutus, after the expulsion of the Tarquins—the Sacellum of Diana, mentioned by Cicero, and destroyed by Piso—the Schools of Arms and Letters,† and the School of Gladiators—the Macellum Magnum, built by Augustus, a market where meat, fish, and all sorts of provisions, were sold—together with hundreds of other buildings, of which the very sites are unknown, and every trace has long since vanished.

Some broken inscriptions that were once dug up, gave some faint shadow of reason to believe that the *Casta Peregrina*, or Camp for Foreign Soldiers, *might* have been where now stands Santa Maria Navicella, a church which derives its name from a little marble ship that was placed before it in the time of Leo the Tenth. Much dispute has arisen whether this sculptured bark be ancient or modern —that it is ugly, I apprehend, can admit of none.

Having finished our rapid survey of the Cœlian Hill, we

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* Pliny, lib. xii. cap. 1.

† The Ludus Matutinus, and Ludus Gallicus.

now descended from it to the Colosseum, which stands in the basin formed by the Cœlian, the Esquiline, and the Palatine Hills, (once occupied by Nero's Great Pond,) and passing round it, ascended

THE ESQUILINE HILL.

We paused at its summit beside the ruins of the mighty Claudian Aqueduct, and the scattered vestiges of buildings, of every age, that are spread over its wide extent. A part of the Esquiline is covered with the streets and buildings of modern Rome, but the rest is abandoned to desolation. One half may be numbered with the living, the other with the dead ; for the mouldering and uncertain ruins of Roman days, and the deserted convents and churches of Papal ages, that are thinly scattered over its wide expanse, people it only with remembrances. They are monuments of glory long since fled—of superstition tottering to its fall. The ruined structures of yesterday are laid low beside the ruined fabrics of two thousand years. We behold the majestic arches of the united Aqueducts of Claudius and Nero stretching over the waste where once was Rome—the castles of their waters—the lonely ruin of Minerva Medica—the subterranean sepulchres, over which the vine now flourishes—the triumphal arch of a debased Emperor—the overthrown temple of a prostrate god—and the deserted theatre of blood and carnage, mingled with the ruined convent, whose gray walls have crumbled into far more total destruction—the weed-grown cloister, whose ancient inhabitants are gone ; and the shrines of martyred saints, that know no votaries now. Such was the prospect that met our view on the lonely summit of the Esquiline, as we wandered among its widely scattered ruins, its shapeless masses, and its nameless walls—fragments of the wreck of ages,—all that the flood of time had left behind. We waited for admittance to the ruins of a convent, in which, the *Itinerario* states, (we afterwards found falsely) some subterranean apartments, adorned with ancient paintings, were to be seen ;* but no human voice replied to our repeated

* In the ruined Convent of S. Eusebio. These apartments were once

call, and we left the "field of the Esquiline"* at last, without having encountered one living being.

From its present, we must turn to its past state. The Esquiline Hill, as well as the Viminal and Quirinal, was added to Rome by Servius Tullius, who enclosed the greater part of it within the circuit of his walls, and built his palace upon it, which he continued to inhabit till the day of his death.

It was in his flight from the Curia Hostilia, (the Senate-house) in the Forum, to this palace on the Esquiline, that he was murdered by the emissaries of Tarquin, his son-in-law; and it was on her return to it from the door of the Senate-House, where she had saluted her husband king, that his unnatural daughter commanded her chariot wheels to be driven over the mangled corpse of her father. The street where this horrible scene happened, and which was ever afterwards called the *Vicus Sceleratus*, must therefore have been between the Forum and the Esquiline;† and though we have no other data to ascertain its precise situation, yet if your imagination desires some point to repose on, you may, if you please, follow Nardini, who fixes the very spot where the chariot wheels of this monster passed over the bleeding body of her parent, exactly at the fountain beside the Church of La Madonna de' Monti.

The Esquiline Mount, though thus early the seat of royalty, was, during the greater part of the republican age, the abode of the most mean and wretched of the Roman people, and their sepulchre. In that part of it which was without the walls, we are told their unburied bones were thrown;‡ a custom which reflects no great credit either on the decency, the humanity, or the policy of the Romans.

The Esquiline had, however, the honour of giving birth to the father of empire, Julius Cæsar,§ and with the empire

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discovered, and were supposed to have belonged to the Baths of the Emperor Gordian, but they were filled up again. The frescos of Raphael Mengs, with which the church was adorned, still attract many visiters.

* Campus Esquilinus. † Livy, lib. i. cap. 48.

‡ Vide Horace, Sat. viii. ver. 14. 16.—Juvenal, &c. In various passages of the classics this disgraceful custom is alluded to.

§ Julius Cæsar was born in that part of the Suburra which was situated on this hill.

it rose into importance. It was soon ennobled with the house and gardens of Mæcenas, of Virgil, of the younger Pliny, of a part of Nero's Golden House, and of the Palace and Baths of the Emperor Titus, the ruins of which are still buried in its bosom. Since, therefore, it was the residence of emperors, ministers, favourites, and courtiers, it must have been that of the great and gay.* They generally inhabited the Suburra, a long street which extended into the plain, and passed up this hill.† Its precise situation is uncertain. After labouring through the long and perplexed dissertations that Nardini, and other departed antiquaries, have written upon this subject, and listening to the still more intolerable oral discourses that the existing tribe have poured into my wearying ears, I honestly confess I am no wiser.

Cicero tells us there was an Altar to Bad Fortune, or Misfortune, upon this hill,‡ erected, it is to be supposed, in propitiation of that most forbidding deity; for such a worship could have been carried on upon no other principle than that on which the Indians adore the devil.

The etymology of this mount, *unless* it can be deduced from *ab Excubiis*, the watches that *might* have been set here, you will be happy to hear, is not to be traced. It has two summits; the *Oppius*, on which stands the Church of St. Pietro in Vincula, built upon a part of the extensive Baths of Titus; and the *Cispius*,§ crowned with the basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, and supposed to have been anciently occupied by the Temple of Juno Lucina.

The Esquiline is of wide extent, and undefined form, the most covered with ruins, and the most deserted of the three eastern hills of Rome,—the Esquiline, the Quirinal, and the Viminal.

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* Nardini, and the authorities quoted by him, state, that in the Suburra on this hill stood the house of Sappho. But of what Sappho? Not certainly of the Lesbian Sappho—the tenth Muse,—who lived six hundred years before Christ:—and history records the fame of no other Sappho.

† Vide Pliny's Letters.

‡ Cicero de Nat. Deor. lib. iii. cap. 25.
Aram Malæ Fortunæ Esquiliis consecratam videmus.

§ Fabricii. Roma, cap. 3.

LETTER XVIII.

VIMINAL AND QUIRINAL HILLS.

The Viminal Hill is to me *terrâ incognita*. It is, or was, situated between the Esquiline and the Quirinal; and I suppose, "if it be not gone, it must be there still." But I have already confessed my incapacity to discover it; and, though I have frequently since most diligently renewed my scrutiny, I have been able to descry nothing that, by any latitude of interpretation, can be construed into the least resemblance to a hill. The truth is, that it has sustained between its two puissant neighbours (the Esquiline and the Quirinal) that extinction which a small state sometimes suffers between two large ones. It has received from them a martyrdom of rather a different description to that which St. Lawrence underwent upon it some centuries before—a fact which I have the best authority for asserting—viz. that of the saint himself. At least, an Italian Count, who always talks to me in English, told me that "*San Lorenzo did say among his acts, that he was heated up, on a gridiron in the Baths of Olympiate, fitch fare on the Hill Viminall, fare now stands his Church of de bread and de ham.*"

Now, as the Count and all the antiquaries, maintain that this church of *de bread and de ham*, (or S. Lorenzo *in pane perna*—so called, I believe, from the doles of bread and ham formerly dealt out to the poor at the convent door,) stands upon the Viminal; and as, it seems, St. Lorenzo,—who certainly ought to know best,—says himself he was broiled alive there, I comfort myself with the conviction, that when I was at that church, I must, unknown to myself, have seen, and even stood upon, that mount; though, to ordinary eyes, the said church seems rather to be in a hollow than upon a hill.

The Viminal, wherever it was, is said to have been so called from the altar of *Jovis Vimineo*, that stood upon it, or, *perhaps*, the altar received its name from the hill, and

the hill from the osiers that *perhaps* grew upon it;* or, *perhaps*, it bore some allusion to *Vimen*, a name for the caduceus of Mercury.† The etymology is dubious, and has been the subject of much discussion; its obvious derivation from *Collis Viminalis*, the hill of Osiers,—the most satisfactory and reasonable,—perhaps, on that account, is much contested by the generality of antiquaries.

We must now bend our steps to the Quirinal, which, like the Viminal and Esquiline, was added to Rome by Servius Tullius;‡ for although ancient writers relate, that Numa had a house§ upon this mount, (which, we are gravely assured by modern antiquaries, stood immediately behind the present Barberini Palace,) it was not considered a part of the city till enclosed within the Tullian walls. The Temple of Romulus Quirinus, from which it derives its name, was built by Numa; and Nardini fancies, that it stood nearly on the spot now occupied by the pretty little church of *S. Andrea Gesuiti*. The pretended steps to the Temple of Romulus Quirinus, now at Ara Cœli, Fulvius says, were made from the marble belonging to a temple on this part of the Quirinal; so that, though the marble is ancient, it would seem that the steps are modern.

The Quirinal is the only one of the Seven Hills that is populous. It is covered with noble palaces, churches, streets, and fountains. It has too many modern buildings to boast of many ancient ones. The vestiges of Constantine's Baths, in the garden of the Colonna Palace, and a part of those of Diocletian, which were built both on this and the invisible Viminal Hill, are, I think, the only remains of antiquity we see over its whole extent.

In the ruins of the Baths of Constantine were found the two grand colossal groupes of a Young Man and Horse, which now stand before the Pope's Palace on the summit of this hill, and from which are derived its modern name of Monte Cavallo, an appellation which is still the most in general use, although a recent feeling of classical taste has revived the ancient one of the Quirinal.

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* Varr. lib. iv. cap. 8.
† Stat. Th. ii. 30.
‡ Livy, lib. i. cap. 44.
§ Vide Plutarch, in Life of Numa.

If we may believe the inscriptions on these statues, they are the works of Phidias and Praxiteles; and the antiquaries, who always contrive to blunder even where it would seem to be impossible, by an absurd anachronism, pronounced them to be rival groupes of these two great masters, representing Alexander and Bucephalus; although the Athenian sculptor was dead before the Macedonian hero or his horse was born.

They are now supposed to represent Castor and Pollux, and are still believed to be by Phidias and Praxiteles. They are certainly extremely spirited and grand in their conception, but destitute of finish; and, more than all, of that high pre-eminent perfection which ought to mark the works of the first of sculptors. Their resemblance is so close in style, that one would be tempted to consider them works of the same age, if not of the same artist; and they approximate so nearly in design, that one might almost be permitted to hesitate before pronouncing them to be productions of masters so great, yet so totally dissimilar. It must at least be acknowledged, that Praxiteles has made but a very slavish copy from the group of his great predecessor.

But any one who has studied the undoubted works of Phidias in the Elgin Marbles, or felt the beauty of the masterpieces of Praxiteles, even in their ancient copies,* will perhaps require something more to convince him that these groupes are the work of either of these great masters, than an inscription, which, like half the inscriptions on ancient sculpture, is most probably false.†

To me it scarcely seems that their excellence is sufficient to have induced the Romans to bring groupes of such colossal size from Greece; neither is it probable such a circumstance would have passed unnoticed by ancient writers; and, if they were executed at Rome, it is certain that Phidias, at least, never came there to sculpture them.

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* No original work of Praxiteles, if we except this, is extant. But the ancient copies of his Cupid Bending the Bow, his Faun, and a few more, enable us to conceive their wonderful perfection.

† It is well known that it was a common trick to inscribe statues falsely with the names of great artists. The Venus de Medicis, which is marked with the name of Cleomenes, is an instance.

But, whether or not the works of these great masters, they are fine pieces of sculpture, and are placed to great advantage on the summit of the Quirinal Hill. It would be in vain now to look for its three summits, the *Collis Salutaris*, the *Collis Mutialis*, and the *Collis Latialis*,* since one only can now be distinguished; and which of the three that is, we have no means of ascertaining.

I might, very much to your annoyance, and very little to your information, make a long and learned dissertation upon the multiplicity of ancient temples, baths, basilicas, circuses, porticos, and all the various descriptions of buildings that once covered it; but the catalogues that have come down to our times are chiefly of the degraded period of the empire; and the monuments of those days when Rome had women for senators, and effeminate boys for emperors, could not be very interesting, even if they were less obscure. We may therefore regret the less that all traces of Heliogabalus's female Senate-house, and of buildings of a still less creditable description, have vanished; but there is one remembrance that can never pass away—it is, that the house of the Scipios was upon this hill. It is thought to have stood where are now the Colonna Palace and gardens; and there is still a little street, called *Vico de' Cornelj*, which we cannot but believe derives its name from the habitation of that illustrious race. But this is a dangerous subject for me, and I will not venture upon it, but at once conclude this hasty sketch of the last of the Seven Hills of Rome.

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* Vide Varrone.

LETTER XIX.

THE ROMAN FORUM.

French taste, which made a flower-garden round the mighty walls of the Colosseum, conceived the bright idea of converting the Roman Forum into a promenade. This they effected. Besides which, during the whole fourteen years that they had possession of Rome, they never ceased to talk of clearing out the Forum to its ancient level; nay, they actually did remove a fountain, and finish the excavation of the half-buried arch of Septimius Severus, and the columns of Jupiter Tonans, which the Pope had previously commenced.

Is not this one among the many proofs, that "*La Grande Nation*" always talked more magnificently than they acted?

We hear much in Rome of what the French intended to have done; we see very little that they did do. An impoverished people and a ruined nobility, can bear witness to the enormous contributions they levied upon this city, but we see few memorials of its expenditure. You will not relish this doctrine I know, but it is nevertheless true.

Whatever the French may have been, however, the English, as far as I see, are at present the most active excavators. There is the Dutchess of D—— at work in one corner, and the Pope, moved by a spirit of emulation, digging away in another, while divers *Milor' Inglesi* are commencing their operations in as many different places; and so many gulfs are opening in the Roman Forum, without any apparent probability of a Curtius appearing to close them, that I cannot but groan over the destruction of the smooth green sod, on which the ruined temples and fallen capitals rested in such beautiful repose, and over the clanking of chains, and toiling of galley slaves, that profane the affecting solitude of a spot once sacred to freedom.

If these discoverers, instead of each choosing, like so many anglers, their own little particular spot according

to their own fancy, would act upon one combined plan,—if they would remove the barns and mean modern buildings that now disgrace the Forum,—fairly carry away the soil that fills it up, and clear it out to the level of the ancient pavement,—some good might come of it, and antiquaries at least would have reason to rejoice. But as long as they continue to make holes in it, and to pile up all the rubbish they take out of one place on the top of another, which may just as likely contain the very object they are in search of, I cannot but think that they are doing more harm than good, especially as the surface they cover with rubbish far exceeds the space they clear. It would require a Hercules to remove the unsightly mountains they have already raised.

The Pope readily grants permission to all sorts of persons to excavate as much as they please, and wherever they please; but he does not give them any great encouragement, for he takes to himself the half of whatever they find; and what is far worse, he will not allow any piece of antiquity, however small, to be carried out of Rome: not a leg of an old statue, nor a scrap of a basso relievo, nor a broken-headed bust, will he suffer to escape him. The finder may sell it in Rome, but may not take it away. Now, as most of our countrymen, who dig and delve in this manner, wish to carry the fruits of their labour to embellish their own country, this law acts almost as a prohibition to their exertions.

An English nobleman, who did not count upon the strict enforcement of this rule, lately dug up an old Sarcophagus, and was preparing to carry off his prize, when its exit was stopped by the *Dogana;* nor could his Holiness be induced to grant permission for its passage, although Sarcophagi are so common in his states, that you cannot enter a Vignaiuolo's hovel in Rome or the Campagna, without seeing the pigs eating out of these sculptured marble memorials of the mighty dead.

However, though nothing ancient can be carried off with the Pope's permission, much may be carried off without it. A silver key at Rome will unlock many gates; and should this fail, an old statue can sometimes make an

elopement over the walls of the city in the dead of night, with an activity very unsuited to its age and gravity.

The present surface of the Forum is from fifteen to twenty feet above its ancient level. You may descend into any of the various excavations that are making in it, and among chained couples of galley slaves, that are labouring, cursing and begging in the same breath, you may stand upon the ancient pavement of the Roman Forum, where Brutus and Cato and Tully once trod. That you tread it now, is indeed almost all that you can be secure of, after the most unwearied inquiries. All except its site is uncertain, and that is fortunately so clearly ascertained by such a multitude of classical authorities, that it can admit of no doubt. I might cite Livy, Propertius, Plutarch, and a crowd of other testimonies,—but is there a page of the domestic history of Rome that does not point out the site of her Forum as between the Palatine and Capitoline Hills? And can it be necessary to take so much pains to prove what is alike undisputed and undisputable? Indeed, on the spot, a thousand local proofs, if proofs were wanting, press conviction on the mind, which at a distance cannot be comprehended.

Anciently there were Forums, or to speak more correctly, *Fora*, of two kinds,—the *Fora Venalia*, answering to our markets for the sale of different commodities, such as the Forum Boarium, Olitorium, &c. &c.; and the *Fora Civilia*, for the transaction of public business. Of these, Republican Rome had only one, which was called *the* Forum, *par excellence*, or the Roman Forum. It was the focus of the factions, the politics, the intrigues, the virtues, the crimes, and the revolutions of Rome. It was the haunt of her orators, her philosophers, and her statesmen; the scene of her elections, and the theatre of her greatness. Here were held the comitia, or assemblies of the people; here stood the Rostra, from which the orators harangued them; the Curia, or Senate-house; the Basilica, or Courts of Justice; the public tribunals; the statues and memorials of great men; and some of the most sacred temples of religion.

While the constitution of Rome continued unimpaired,

this was its heart—its centre. But when her freedom, her ancient virtue, and early simplicity, were no more, —when, from the sound body of a vigorous Republic, she became the head of an overgrown empire, *the* Forum no longer sufficed. Another was built by Julius Cæsar, which bore his name; and his example was followed by Augustus, and by many of the emperors. But of these, and of their remains, we shall speak hereafter; at present, let us direct our attention to the Roman Forum.

We learn from Vitruvius, that unlike the Forums* of Greece, which were square, the Forums of Rome, and of all the Roman cities, were oblong, being one-third longer than their breadth. Now, the breadth of the Forum, comprised between the bases of the Palatine and Capitoline Hills, being ascertained, its length has been found by this rule.

It extends from east to west along the base of the Capitoline Hill, and its four corners are supposed to be nearly at the Church of Sta Martina and S. Luca on the north-east; that of Santa Maria della Consolazione on the north-west; the little church of St. Theodore, the reputed Temple of Romulus, on the south-west; and an unmarked point where the arch of the Fabii once stood, within the line of the Temple of Antoninus and Faustini, on the south-east. An imaginary line drawn between these four points will describe its (supposed) limits.†

Even in its present state of desolation, and surrounded only with a few scattered monuments of its vanished splendour, the very names of which are lost in oblivion, it is something to feel that we stand upon the site of the Roman Forum. Of these monuments, and indeed of all the ruins of Rome, very little is certainly known. The Colosseum, the Pantheon, the Obelisks, the three Triumphal Arches,

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* I have throughout taken the liberty of Anglicising this word. I must write as I speak, and I cannot talk of *Fora*.

† Ovid (Fast 3,) calls it *Forum Magnum;* but the space now assigned to it is certainly not large, and apparently very inadequate to the immense number of buildings, &c. which are recorded to have stood in it. Though the site of the Roman Forum can admit of no dispute, its bounds are not perhaps so certainly ascertained.

and the two Triumphal Columns, tell their own story; but the great majority of temples, pillars, walls, and tombs, with the exception of a very few which bear inscriptions, are involved in doubt and perplexity; in endless conjecture and inextricable confusion.

Bitter, indeed, have been the battles that the antiquaries have waged about the remains in the Forum: not one of them has escaped discussion, and yet they are all as uncertain as ever. Indeed, I must say, that the laborious researches and prolonged controversies of these learned gentlemen, have never yet ascertained the real name of any thing; and wherever *that* has been brought to light by the subsequent discovery of inscriptions, (as in the case of the tomb of the Scipios and the column of Phocas,) not one of their manifold suppositions has ever been verified. They have, however, christened every thing that wanted a name with a most bountiful variety, so that there is scarcely an old ruin of Rome that has not as many *aliases* attached to it as ever fell to the share of any notorious offender at the Old Bailey. I have already lived long enough at Rome myself, to see the Temple of Jupiter Stator converted into the Comitium, and the Temple of Concord transformed into the Temple of Fortune. Thus, the delightful delusion which entranced me when I fancied that I stood on the very spot rendered sacred by the eloquence of Cicero, and knew not that a doubt existed of its truth, has vanished, "like the baseless fabric of a vision;" and ill is that blissful dream compensated by the cold hypothetical suppositions that have supplied its place. I have, however, long been compelled to acknowledge, with grief, that the present structure never existed in the days of Cicero. In the first place, at that period there were no temples of marble,* a material which has entered largely into the composition of this;

* Plin. lib. xxxvii. cap. 8. Marble came into use, in architecture, soon after this period; but even if this had been the Temple of Concord, it could not have been *Cicero's Temple*, because the Temple of Concord was rebuilt by Tiberius, (vide Suet. Life of Tib. 20.) and perhaps by succeeding Emperors.

and in the second, this temple is built of uncorresponding columns, apparently taken from various edifices;* and from its defective proportions, and bad style of architecture, it is pronounced by a celebrated antiquary to be a work of the reign of Constantine the Great. Now, as it has no date, I ventured to suggest, that in however villanous a taste, it might surely have been built a few years, nay, even a single year, before his time ; as he was apparently a more likely person to knock down Pagan temples than to build them up. No! The indignant antiquary more positively asserted it to be a work of his reign, and of no other ; and thus, upon the sole evidence of its intrinsic deformity—which, after all, I never could discover to be so very great—simple people like me are required to believe that a Christian Prince built a Pagan temple.

Some forty or fifty years ago, indeed, it was suggested that this much vilified portico might possibly be the Temple of Fortune, but the proposition was then received with contempt; it continued to be called the Temple of Concord, and might have been so called to this day, had not a recent excavation at a little distance in another part of the Forum brought to light, amidst a vast heap of shattered marbles, remains of the altar, the columns, and inscriptions of the true Temple of Concord, the site of which is thus at length correctly ascertained, although its buried fragments alone remain.† Being no longer the

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* Winkelman remarks, that, in repairing the columns of this portico, the shafts of which were in two parts, they had turned the upper half upside down, and thus placed the middle of some of the columns immediately under the capitals.

† The site of this excavation, and of the Temple of Concord, is a little upon the declivity of the Capitoline Hill, close to and extending under the old tower of the Low Ages, at the corner of the modern Capitol, and exactly at the angle formed by the modern footway, or *Scala Cordonata*, that leads from the Forum to the Piazza di Campidoglio, and which is conjectured to occupy nearly the same situation as the ancient *Clivus Asyli*. Thus, backed by the Capitol, and fenced in laterally by buildings, it afforded, as Cicero expected, a secure retreat, where the Senate might deliberate, unawed and undisturbed by popular tumult and clamour. But it must have been a very small building ; and how the six hundred Senators and the Conspirators all got into it together, is extremely hard to understand.

Temple of Concord, therefore, this Ionic portico has been once more christened the Temple of Fortune; the chief reasons assigned for which belief are, first, because the Temple of Fortune was burnt under Maxentius,* and this temple was burnt under—somebody, as its inscription proves;† secondly, this temple has been restored, and so *might* the Temple of Fortune, for we never hear any more of it; thirdly, some Temple of Fortune, some eighteen hundred years ago, did stand near the Temple of Jupiter Tonans;—now the three beautiful Corinthian columns of Grecian marble *called* the Temple of Jupiter Tonans stand very near this portico—*ergo*, this is the Temple of Fortune.‡

Having arrived at this logical conclusion, we shall next find, by a parity of reasoning, that the said three columns must be the Temple of Jupiter Tonans, because they stand near the Temple of Fortune. But we have other weighty reasons; for these columns stood on the declivity of the Capitoline Hill, where stood the temple of Jupiter Tonans,§ (and fifty other buildings besides.) Then, from their style of architecture, they are usually ranked as a work of the age of Augustus,‖ who built the temple of Jupiter Tonans, (and at least a hundred other temples;) and lastly, one of the ornaments of the richly sculptured frieze at the side, the cap of the High Priest, is thought to be represented as struck with lightning.

Although these beautiful columns, however, have only supposition for the name they bear, yet as no other luckily has ever been found out for them, we may unmolested be permitted to fancy that we see the remains of that magnificent temple erected by the piety and gratitude of Augustus to that Being, whose mercy averted from him the

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* Zosimus, lib. ii. and iii. is said to record this fact.

† SENATVS POPVLVSQVE ROMANVS INCENDIO CONSVMPTVM RESTITVIT.

‡ The reader may consult Nardini Roma Antica, and Nibby Del Foro Romano, for all that *can* be said on this subject.

§ Victor, Region viii.

‖ Such is the extremely florid, though beautiful style of ornament that characterizes these noble columns, that I should rather have classed them about the time of Domitian.

thunderbolt that struck to death the slave by his side. The fragment of the inscription only retains the mutilated word ESTITVER, which merely proves that it had been restored from the injuries of time, accident, or violence, at some uncertain period.

The solitary column which stands in the Forum, was called by antiquaries, a part of the Temple of Jupiter Custos—of Vulcan—of the Bridge of Caligula—of any thing but what it proved to be, when the inscription on the pedestal was brought to light by the simple operation of digging out the earth,* and it was found to be a column dedicated by the Greek Exarch Smaragdus to the Emperor Phocas, in the seventh century. As the arts at that period were almost at their lowest ebb, it is conjectured that the column itself, which is far too good for such an age, must have been taken by the Exarch from some ancient edifice, to serve his adulatory purpose. The column may be beautiful, but who can look with interest or admiration on a monument erected on the sacred soil of Roman virtue, by a slave to that tyrant, whose hands were, even then, imbrued in the blood of a suppliant monarch and his guiltless children ?

The three beautiful columns near the base of the Palatine Hill—the same that I told you were remains of the Temple of Jupiter Stator, but of which nothing is certain, except that they are the purest and most faultless models of the Corinthian order now in the world—have had so many names, that at present, in order to prevent dispute, they are generally called " the Disputed Columns ;" for, by whatever name you happened to christen them in conversation, it was more than probable that the person you addressed knew them by some other ; and, after mutual explanation, each party secretly pitied or despised the ignorance of his acquaintance. As for instance, somebody mentions the remains of the Temple of Jupiter Stator.

" Jupiter Stator !" exclaims his friend—" Where is it ? —I never saw it."

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* This excavation was made by the late Dutchess of Devonshire.

"Impossible! Never saw the three beautiful columns in the Forum, where they are excavating the marble staircase!"

"O, that is the Temple of Castor and Pollux."

"I beg your pardon," interposes a third; "it is thought, upon the best authority, to be part of Caligula's bridge."

"Caligula's bridge!—Nay, that is impossible, however; for it was destroyed nearly as soon as himself. I believe it is now considered a part of the Curia."

"Say rather the Comitium, which was in front of the Curia," rejoins another. And so they go on. Thus "the Disputed Columns," as they are now called, by general consent, to avoid these endless altercations, after passing through multifarious designations as remains of every imaginable variety of temple, are at last not allowed to be any temple at all, but are pronounced to have belonged to the Comitium:* and thus, opinion, which goes round like the hand of a clock, now stands at the same point it did about fifty years ago, when all the leading antiquaries of the day echoed Nardini's assertion, that they belonged to that building. In this instance, I almost think that they have for once stumbled upon the truth. I will not, however, trouble you with a long disquisition to prove it, because I am convinced you would be content to believe it to be any thing sooner than listen to it. I will only ob-

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* The *Comitium* was originally an uncovered building, but in A. U. 540, it was covered with a roof.—(Livy, lib. xxvii. cap. 36, Dec. iii.) When rebuilt by Cæsar and Augustus, it was surrounded with a peripteral portico of fifteen columns at the sides, and eight at the fronts. The *Comitia*, or assemblies of the people for the election of the subordinate priests and magistrates, were held here. These Comitia must not be confounded with the *Comitia* for the election of the Consuls, and all the superior priests and magistrates, which were held in the Campus Martius, where the people were assembled in small square enclosures, called *Septa*, from their resemblance to sheep-folds, each tribe having one. These *Septa* were of wood during the republican age, but Agrippa built them of marble; and, in compliment to Augustus, called them *Septa Julia*. The right of the people to elect their chief magistrates in the Campus Martius was taken from them by Tiberius.—Tac. Ann. lib. i. cap. 15.—The Comitium was also a place of sentence, and even of execution, for criminals, and as such alone, it would seem to have been used in the times of the Emperors, when it could have been no longer necessary for political assemblies of the people. Augustus also exhibited a snake, fifty cubits long, in the Comitium. Suet. Aug. 43. Vide Plin. lib. xi. Ep. 6.

serve, that as the Comitium is known to have been nearly at the base of the Palatine Hill, immediately in front of the Curia, and considerably elevated above the Forum, from which a flight of steps led up to it, these columns exactly answer the description ; for they are so far elevated above the ancient forum, as to be on a level with the present surface ; the marble steps in front of them have been brought to light by the recent excavation ; and they are exactly in front of the lofty brick wall of the Curia, at the foot of the Palatine Hill. " But is this the wall of the Curia ?" I hear you ask. That indeed may be disputed, but it occupies the site that every concurring testimony seems clearly to assign to the Roman Senate-house, or the *Curia Julia*, as it was called, because begun by Julius Cæsar, though finished by Augustus, or rather by the Triumvirs. It replaced the *Curia Hostilia*, which took its name from Tullus Hostilius. It is marked in one of the fragments of the Ichnography, or the ancient plan of Rome ; and before it is a part of a building supposed to be the Comitium, with its colonnaded front, and steps leading up to it, exactly corresponding to these " Disputed Columns." They are, by all critics, ascribed to the Augustan age, another reason for believing them a part of the Comitium, which we know was built by Augustus, and which we do not know was afterwards rebuilt. The Consular *Fasti*, too, were found here, and it is obvious that either the Curia, or Comitium, was the most probable situation for them.* I could find abundance of other reasons for believing it ; for truth—for which I have some regard, even when it shakes a favourite hypothesis—compels me to observe, that the Curia also stood at the base of the Palatine, and had steps leading up to it, and that the Temple of Castor and Pollux† stood at the base of the Palatine, and that it also must have had steps leading up to it ; for Plutarch mentions.‡ that when Cato entered the

* Vide Panvinius. Some additional fragments of the Fasti have also come to light in the present excavation.

† The Temple of Castor and Pollux was rebuilt by Augustus, and dedicated by Tiberius. Vide Tacitus, Ann. lib. ii., and Suetonius, Life of Tiberius, 20.

‡ In his Life of Cato of Utica.

Forum, he saw the steps of that temple covered with gladiators, and at the top of them Metellus seated with Cæsar; and all these buildings were equally of the age of Augustus. Yet we know that Caligula used the portico of the Temple of Castor and Pollux for the entrance of his palace on the Palatine;* and therefore it must have been at the very base of the hill, and nearer to it than these three columns. For this, and many other reasons, I think we are justified in concluding, that these "Disputed Columns" *probably* belonged to the Comitium, and that, at all events, they do not belong to the temple of Castor and Pollux, of which there are now no remains whatever.† That temple, which stood from the earliest to the latest period of Roman story,‡ was originally built upon the margin of the Lake Juturna, where the two heavenly youths, who brought, with preternatural speed, the annunciation of the victory of the Romans over the Latins, at the lake Regillus, after watering their foaming steeds, disappeared in its waters before the eyes of the astonished multitude, and were recognised as the *Dioscuri*. It is well known, that upon this occasion they gave an incontestable proof of their divinity, by stroking the beard of a man who doubted their tale, which thereupon turned from black to red.§ They also appeared, mounted upon their white horses, at this same Lake of Juturna, to announce that Perseus, King of Macedonia, was conquered and a captive; but we hear no mention of their operations there, upon beards. This Lake of Juturna is a most puzzling piece of water, for when we are in straits to find room for a temple, what are we to do with a whole lake? And not one lake only, but three—for we are gravely assured that the Lake of Juturna, the Lake of Curtius, and

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* Suet. in Calig.

† There is indeed a little bit of old wall between the supposed wal of the Curia and the little church of St. Theodore, which some antiquaries denominate the remains of the Temple of Castor and Pollux.

‡ It is enumerated among the buildings of Rome, by Rufus and Victor, the regionary writers of the 5th century.

§ Plutarch's Life of Paulus Emilius. The descendants of this man, the Domitian family, ever afterwards retained the cognomen of Ænobarbus. Nero was one of them.

the Lake of Servilius, were all in the Forum ; but it is in vain to tell us that there ever was any thing like a lake here. It is a physical impossibility that this lake of Juturna could have been any thing larger than the basin of the fountain. How Castor and Pollux, and their horses, got into it, is their business, not ours. But to return to the present times.

The ruins I have enumerated, consisting of the Triumphal Arch of Septimius Severus, the Temple of Jupiter Tonans, and the Temple of Fortune, at the base of the Capitoline Hill ; the solitary column of the Emperor Phocas ; the ruined wall of the Curia, and these three "disputed," or reputed, columns of the Comitium, at the base of the Palatine ;—are the only remains of antiquity that now stand within the limits ascribed to the Forum.

Of the immense number of buildings of all sorts which once stood there—since the toilsome repetition of all their names could answer no good end that I know of—except to set you to sleep—I will spare you the enumeration, and only notice one or two of the most remarkable.

Behind the Curia, at the base of the Palatine Hill, but, according to some authorities, without the Forum, was the *Græcostasis*, or the hall in which the foreign ambassadors awaited the deliberations of the Senate ; and it doubtless derived its name from the Grecians, who, in the early ages of Rome, were the only Ambassadors sent to the State. As the Græcostasis appears on a fragment of the Ichnography,* it must have been standing in the time of Septimius Severus.† The *Basilica Porcia*, the most

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* The Ichnography, or ancient plan of Rome, a work of the reign of S. Severus, which formed the pavement of a Temple, now the Church of S. S. Cosmo and Damiano, was found broken into fragments on the ground, and the parts that have escaped total destruction are affixed on the wall of the staircase of the Capitol, without any attempt at arrangement—which, indeed, would be wholly impracticable.

† It is recorded that Antoninus Pius rebuilt the Græcostasis, but no mention is made of his having touched the Comitium. Yet Mr. Nibby, (p. 63, Del Foro Romano,) concludes that he united both these buildings into one ; because, *three hundred years after*, of the two Regionaries, (Rufus and Victor,) one mentions the Græcostasis, and the other the Comitium—though, even *then*, they do not pretend they were the same buildings.

ancient basilica in Rome, (built by Cato the Censor,) adjoined the Curia Hostilia, and was burnt down with it during the tumult raised by the populace after the murder of Clodius, when they tore up the benches and tables in the Senate-house, and lighted his funeral-pile upon its floor.*

The Rostra seems, from various passages of the classics, to have been near the Curia and Comitium, facing the Capitol, consequently on the south side of the Forum, and in a central situation; but its exact site certainly cannot now be ascertained. It was not, as I had imagined, a small pulpit, but an elevated building, large enough to contain a considerable number of people; as appears from a medal, on which it is represented, adorned with the *rostra*, or beaks of ships, that gave it its name.† It is generally said to have been removed by the crafty policy of Cæsar, from the centre to a corner of the Forum, (near the Church of St. Theodore,) in order that the orators might not be so well heard by the people; but some antiquaries affirm that, without changing the situation of the ancient Rostra, Julius Cæsar erected another, which was called the New, or the *Julian Rostra*.‡

At the base of the Palatine Hill, surrounded with the Sacred Grove, and enclosed with a wall, stood the Temple of Vesta, and the House of the Vestal Virgins, to which the *Regia* of Numa served as a portico. The Sacred Grove, indeed, might have been very small, and the house of the vestal virgins need not have been very large; as, at their first institution by Numa Pompilius,

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* Vide Cicero's Life by Middleton.

† In the fifth century of the republic, all the ships were taken from the conquered and rebellious colony of Antium, and the rostra, or prows of those which were burnt, were hung around the Tribune of Public Harangues in the Forum, which, from thence, bore the name of Rostra. We sometimes find it called *Templum*, having been consecrated as such by the augurs.—Vide Livy, lib. viii. cap. 14.

‡ Suetonius, in his Life of Augustus, (100,) mentions that two funeral orations were pronounced in his praise; one, by Tiberius, from before the *temple* of Julius Cæsar. (Pro *Æde* D. Julii:) the other *pro rostris veteribus*. I cannot think this a sufficient proof that there were two Rostra in the Forum, and it is, I believe, the sole one. Suetonius, in every other part of his lives, and Tacitus, throughout the whole course of his history, invariably speak of the Rostra as if there was one only.

they were only four in number, and never exceeded six; yet still, as they were virgins of the highest rank, they must have had suitable accommodations—and it is very difficult to find room for them here. This house, temple, and Sacred Grove, however, are supposed to have stood at the northern base of the Palatine.* The odd-looking Church of St. Theodore, or St. Toto, as he is vulgarly called, is believed, by some antiquaries of the present day, to be built upon the ruins of the Temple of Vesta. But, according to the tradition of ages, as well as the belief of the learned through every preceding period, it occupies the site of the little Temple of Romulus, built on the sacred spot where, beneath the shade of the *Ficus Ruminalis*, the twins were exposed and suckled by the wolf. There is apparently an obvious objection to this supposition, which is, that it is not upon the Tiber; but it must be remembered that it was upon the *Velabrum*, or marsh formed by its stagnating waters, which, before it was drained, was so deep as to be crossed by a ferry, and which is yet liable to be overflowed during the great floods; and that it was during a flood, when the standing waters prevented all access to the current of the Tiber,† that the twins were exposed. They were found "*vagientes in fluminis alluvie.*" It is recorded, that a bronze figure of the Wolf and the Twins was dedicated in the year of Rome 458, at the Ficus Ruminalis,‡ in the temple or "sacred spot" consecrated to Romulus, which, we are told, was at the foot of the Palatine, on the road leading to the Circus Maximus,§—a description which points out the exact situation of the Church of St. Theodore; and the fact, that at this very church the ancient bronze

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* Cicero says that a voice was heard, "*a Luco Vestæ, qui a Palatii radice in novam viam devexus est.*" This Via Nova (vide Plan) went along the northern base of the Palatine from the Roman Forum, through the Velabrum.

† Livy, lib. i. cap. 4. ‡ Livy, lib x. cap. 16.

§ Dionysius Halicarnassus, (lib. i. p. 65.) Dion. Halic. also states that it was near the ancient grove and cave dedicated by Evander to Pan, (the Lupercal,) which is universally believed to have been on this very part of the Palatine. It is disputed whether Dion. Hal. speaks of a temple or a consecrated spot of ground. Varro, however, speaking of the same spot, calls it Ædem Romuli. (Lib. iv. cap. 8.) It is most probable that it was first a consecrated circle of ground, and that afterwards a temple was built upon it.

Etruscan statue of the Wolf and the twins was found,* certainly affords a strong presumption that this was the Temple or "sacred enclosure" of Romulus.† The diminutive plainness and simplicity of its form may be adduced in support of either hypothesis, because the Gods permitted no change of form in their temples.‡ In like manner, the structures sacred to Romulus were religiously preserved to the latest times in their primitive state; and even the straw-roofed cottage, the *Casa Romuli*, on the Tarpeian Rock, is said to have been rebuilt exactly as it originally stood. The Christians, on converting this temple into a church, perhaps continued to keep it up in the same form, from convenience or habit.§ Indeed, this was in conformity to their usual custom, for they even put porticos before the churches they built themselves, to assimilate them as much as possible to the pagan temples, and adopted altars, images, and every thing pagan, till at last they paganized Christianity.

But another, and a far stronger proof of the identity of the church and the temple, is furnished by the curious fact, that in pagan times it was the custom for diseased, or weakly children, to be brought to the Temple of Romulus for cure; and, to this day, mothers bring their rickety offspring to this shrine to work their restoration. The canonized Toto has succeeded to the deified Romulus. The miracles are the same; and, except in name, in what respect is the faith altered? On the whole, it seems to me a supposition rather more than usually reasonable, that the odd little Church of St. Toto occupies the site of the

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* Signor Nibby denies this fact, but it has never been disputed, and every authority is against him; for even Fulvius, the solitary writer whose testimony he brings forward, expressly says it was found at the Ficus Ruminalis, (the reputed situation of which has always been here,) from thence conveyed to St. John Lateran, and from thence to the Capitol.—The Statue of the Wolf and the Twins, which Cicero records to have been struck by lightning, was anciently upon the Capitol, and, consequently, not the same as this.

† And probably the same Temple of Romulus in which Virgilius consulted the assembled Senate.—Livy, lib. iv. cap. 21. Another Temple of Romulus was built by Papirius. A. U. 459. Livy, lib. x. cap. 46.

‡ Tacitus, Hist. lib. iv. cap. 53. The Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus was rebuilt of the same form and dimensions, in the reign of Domitian, as in the days of Tarquin.

§ This curious little church was rebuilt, for the last time, and exactly in the same form, by Pope Nicholas V., in 1451.

Temple of Romulus; and as it has always enjoyed that name, we will, if you please, continue to call it so—notwithstanding that it is not the newest fashion.

The *Ficus Ruminalis*, that celebrated tree that sheltered the infancy of the royal twins, and flourished, during the early years of Rome, beside the little temple sacred to its founder,* strange to say, in after times, grew in the Comitium. But it was a surprising tree; for not only had it got into the Comitium—nobody knows how,†—and flourished there, in a covered building, in the midst of the crowded and tumultuous assemblies of the people, during so many ages of republican Rome; but having died away with Roman liberty, like a Phœnix from its ashes, it once more sprung forth into new life and verdure in the days of the Emperors.‡

But, as if one fig-tree was not enough in the Comitium, we are informed that another grew there also.§ It was called the Ficus Navia, and flourished on the spot where Accius Navius, the celebrated soothsayer, to the confusion of Tarquin, cut a whetstone through with a razor.

Near the *Ficus Ruminalis* was the *Lupercal*, consecrated to Pan by Evander, where the festival of the Lupercalia was held even before the birth of the infant founder of Rome,‖ and where the wolf sheltered and nurtured the twins. Even in the days of the Emperors, in the heart of Rome, and surrounded with the splendid buildings of their Imperial Palaces, the Lupercal still seems to have preserved something of its primitive form. But we may look in vain for any vestige of it now—for the grove of oak that shaded it, or the fountain that flowed from it. We only know that it was on the steep northern side of the Palatine Hill, above the way that led from the Forum towards the Circus.¶

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* Plutarch's Life of Romulus.

† Pliny gives the following account of it:—"Sub ea inventa est Lupa infantibus præbens rumen (ita vocabant mammam) miraculo ex æde juxta dicata tanquam in Comitium sponte transisset."

‡ U. c. 811. Tacitus, Ann. lib. xiii. cap. 58.

§ Festus, cited in the work Del Foro Romano, p. 83.

‖ Livy, lib. i. cap. 5.

¶ Dion. Hal. lib. i. p. 25. Plutarch's Life of Romulus. The place in which it was situated was called *Germano*, which was corrupted into Cermano.

Near the Palatine Hill, also, was the Temple of Julius Cæsar, and the market for slaves.* Thus, on the very spot where one man was elevated to the rank of a god thousands were sold like brutes. Yes, even here, on the very soil of freedom, and while the air resounded with the strains of immortal eloquence that were poured forth in its sacred name, slaves were publicly sold in chains! I could not pass this spot without the reflection, that where I now stood, gazing upon the ruins of Roman greatness, thousands of my countrymen had once been sold into slavery. The captives brought from Britain, as part of the booty that Cæsar gained in his expedition thither, met this fate.† How little did those proud masters of the world then dream, that thousands from that obscure and barbarous island, when it had become the seat of knowledge, refinement, virtue, and civilization such as they never knew, should one day freely seek this spot, for the gratification of enlightened curiosity, when their name, their power, their laws, their language, and their gods, had vanished from the earth!

But it was not only in Pagan, it was in Christian times, that Britons were sold at Rome for slaves.‡ Nay, it is a curious circumstance that this unchristian-like traffic was the proximate cause of the conversion of our ancestors to Christianity. It is recorded of Gregory the Great, before he was Pope, that in passing one day through the market at Rome, he was struck with the long flaxen hair and blooming countenances of some British youths exposed there to sale, and inquired to what country they belonged. Being told they were "Angles"—"Meant for Angels!" he exclaimed: "And from what Province?" They informed him from "Deira."§ "De-ira! Saved from the wrath of God!" ejaculated the delighted Bishop. "And what is the name of the King of that country?" They

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* Seneca in Sapient. cap. 13.

† Strabo (lib. iv.) records this fact, of which no mention is made by Cæsar in his Commentaries, probably because it was a matter of course; for the sale of the prisoners taken in war, formed a considerable part of the booty of the conquerors.

‡ Vide Hume's Hist. of England, vol. i. p. 32.

§ A district in Northumberland.

told him it was "Alla," (Ella.) "Sing Allalujah!" exclaimed Gregory, in a transport—"and moved by these coincidences, which seemed to him so happy," he would have set out forthwith to convert the British, had not his flock, among whom he was extremely popular, interposed, and besought him not to trust his person among such savages. But though frightened out of the design himself, after his elevation to the papal throne he despatched St. Augustine, with forty other monks, to preach the gospel in Britain.

But we have wandered far from the Roman Forum. I believe I left you at the Temple of Julius Cæsar. This building, which was erected above the spot on which his body was burnt,* and which at all periods afforded an inviolable sanctuary for criminals, is *supposed* to have stood on the western side of the Forum. Separated from it by the *Vicus Tuscus*, is *supposed* to have stood the Basilica Julia, which is *supposed* to have been built by Julius Cæsar himself, and is *supposed* to have occupied the north-western corner of the Forum; and on the *supposed* site of which the Church of S. Maria della Consolazione at present stands.†

On the north side of the Forum was the Temple of Saturn, or the Public Treasury, of which Pompey carried away the key when he fled from the city, and Cæsar broke open the doors as soon as he arrived at it. In front of it was the gilded column, the *Milliarium Aureum*,‡ on which the distances of the great Roman roads were marked in miles. This mile-stone, if I remember right, was first placed there by Augustus; but one of the Gracchi had the merit of proposing this mode of measurement.

Near this stood the Triumphal Arch of Tiberius, erected in honour of that emperor, in consequence of the glorious recovery of the Varian Eagles, and the great victories obtained in Germany, by Germanicus, *under his*

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* Dion. lib. xlvii. p. 365.

† Vide Signor Nibby Del Foro Romano, p. 34, 98, &c.

‡ Tacitus (Hist. lib. i.) mentions that it stood before the Temple of Saturn.

auspices,* although he was himself all the while in Rome. A mighty easy way of gaining glory this!

On this side of the Forum, near the Ionic portico, called the Temple of Fortune, was also the *Scuola Xantha*, which sounding name meant nothing more than the station of the Public Notaries. It was so called, as the inscription found here proves, from Xanthus, the name of one of its founders, and consisted of three *Tabernæ*, or Roman shops.

The Church of Santa Martina and St. Luke, at the north-eastern corner of the Forum, is, not on the very best authority, (that of an inscription found near it,) said to stand on the site of the *Secretarium Senatus*, where the writings of the Senate were kept. But we hear of no such building in Roman days, nor is it very clear what writings those were.† By the vulgar this church is called the Temple of Mars, with more appearance of reason; for the beautiful Temple of Mars the Avenger, erected by Augustus, formed the principal building of his small but magnificent Forum, which certainly lay behind this church, if it did not occupy its site; and the place bears the name of Marforio to this day.‡ It has been shrewdly suspected, not only that the church of Santa Martina has usurped the place of the Temple of Mars, but that the saint herself is no other than the blustering god in petticoats;§ and the inscription on the church seems to countenance the suspicion.

Next door to Santa Martina, is the Church of St. Adrian, not the deified emperor of that name, though he had a

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* Vide Tacitus, Ann. lib. ii.

† We find it recorded at an early period of the Republic, that the *decrees* of the Senate were always to be brought to the Temple of Ceres. Livy, lib. iii. cap. 55.

‡ So does the colossal statue of a river god, which used to stand here, and was the vehicle of the answers to the sallies af Pasquin's sarcastic wit. It is now in the court of the Museum of the Capitol.

§ In the same way, a church in another part of Rome, built on the ruins of a Temple of Apollo, is dedicated to a certain *St. Apollonaris*, who is conjectured to be no other than the Pagan God, converted into a Christian saint. Sta Veronica is suspected to be a canonized handkerchief, or the true image of the face of our Saviour impressed on the cloth with which it was covered;—a catholic, not a scriptural miracle.

temple somewhere hereabouts, but Pope Saint Adrian the First. For my part, conceiving it quite as reasonable to build temples to emperors as to popes, I should have just as much reverence for the one as for the other; but it is amusing to see the worship formerly paid, perhaps on this very spot, to a Pagan Emperor, transferred to a Christian Pontiff. The idolatry the same, and, as it happens, even in name unchanged.

The antiquaries will have this church to be the identical Basilica of Paulus Æmilus, for no earthly reason but because it has an old brick wall, and had gates of ancient bronze; as if the wall and the gates might not have belonged to any other of the various buildings which stood on the east side of the Forum. I should be glad to know where is the probability that the Basilica of Paulus Æmilius has stood out all the conflagrations, battlings, and destructions, that have taken place here since his time; or if it did, that this paltry old wall formed a part of that splendid structure?* We find it recorded in Tacitus,† that Marcus Lepidus applied for leave to repair the Basilica of Paulus Æmilius; but this was long before the fire of Rome, which totally destroyed three quarters of the city, and the subsequent battles, in the times of Vitellius and Vespasian, in the Capitol and Forum. It is indeed true, that a *Basilica Emilia* appears on a fragment of the Ichnography of Rome; therefore there was such a building in the reign of Sept. Severus; but we have every reason to conclude, that, like every other republican erection, is had been rebuilt. In front of it there is a portico inscribed *Libertatis.*

On this side of the Roman Forum (the east) there are no other remains which even antiquarian credulity can assign to Roman times. The Temple, Ædicola, Altar, or Image, of Venus Cloacina, for antiquaries have never settled which she possessed,‡ stood nearly at the south-

* Plutarch, in his life of Paulus Æmilius, calls it one of the most superb edifices of the city.

† Tacitus, Ann. lib. iii. cap. 72.

‡ According to Livy, lib. ix. cap. 48. it would seem to have been a Temple.

east extremity of the Forum. Here, too, must have been the tribunal of Appius, for it is related that Virginius snatched a knife from a shop-board close by, and that the unfortunate Virginia fell beneath his murderous blow, at the base of the statue of the goddess.

In this vicinity, forming the limits of the Forum to the south, was the sacred area and altar of Vulcan, consecrated to that god even from the days of Romulus, who himself dedicated within its bounds, the triumphal car of bronze, the spoil of Camerium, upon which he placed his own statue crowned by Victory.* It was here that, according to some accounts, from the midst of the assembled Senators, Romulus was snatched from earth to heaven.† Here grew the sacred lotus, planted by his own hand, and the coeval cypress, which never withered till Rome mourned the tyranny of Nero.‡ It was here that during two days blood rained down from heaven; and here stood the little bronze temple of Concord.§

Along the whole line of the south side of the Forum, not a single vestige now remains of any building, ancient or modern, excepting the three beautiful columns of the Comitium beneath the Palatine, of which I have already spoken.

At the south-east corner of the Forum, exactly within the line of the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina, once stood the Arch of Fabius the Censor, erected in honour of his victory over the Allobroges,‖ of which not a trace remains.

Beneath this vanished arch the Via Sacra¶ entered the

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* Plutarch, Life of Romulus.

† Plutarch. But Plutarch himself, Livy, lib. i. cap. 16, and most writers, relate that it happened at a place north of Rome, called the Goat's Marsh.

‡ Plin. Lib. xvi. cap. 44.

§ Dedicated by C. Flavius. Livy, lib. ix. cap. 34.

‖ I need scarcely observe, that they were a people of considerable importance in Gaul, frequently mentioned by Cæsar, and the same who were afterwards concerned in the conspiracy of Cataline.

¶ The Via Sacra was a prolongation of the Via Triumphalis, which terminated near the arch of Constantine, where the Via Sacra commenced. The progress of a triumph must not have been confined to this triumphal way, because the chariot of Cæsar in his proudest triumph, broke down in the Velabrum, (Suet. Cæs. 37,) through which the Via Sacra is not supposed to have passed.

Forum, and the antiquaries having got it from thence through the existing arch of Septimius Severus, tell us it then turned to the left, but how to get it up the Capitoline Hill to the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, they are wholly at a loss. Now, since the whole face of the hill has evidently tumbled down, I think it is no great wonder that the road has disappeared. However, for want of a better place, some of them conceived that it must have passed between the porticos of the Temples of Fortune and Jupiter Tonans, which are at right angles with, and a very few feet distant from, each other. A recent excavation here having brought to light a pavement of large round stones between the two temples, the proposition that this is the real Via Sacra is triumphantly maintained by one party of antiquaries, whilst it is contemptuously sneered at by another. I have nothing to do with their squabbles, but common sense seems to rebel against the possibility of four horses abreast being squeezed into such a narrow space ;—to say nothing of the forty elephants, which, in Cæsar's Gallic triumph, surrounded him on the right and the left, bearing lighted flambeaux, in his ascent to the Capitol.* While we were discussing the point, and stretching our necks over the hole, it occurred to me that a coachman was a much better judge of the practicability of the passage, than all the antiquaries in the world ; and seeing an English brother of the whip, whom we knew, driving his tilbury, dennet, or some such vehicle, up and down the avenue of trees in the Forum, which he called the Via Sacra, we agreed to refer the question to him. He could not at first be made to understand or believe, that the Romans drove their four-in-hand, four-a-breast : however, it made no difference in his decision.

"*That* a road !" he exclaimed ; "why, Lord help you, I would not engage to drive a wheel-barrow tandem along it. Four-a-breast indeed !—I'll bet you what you please you dont even drive a pair. The thing's impossible !—Why, don't you see it would smash my tilbury ?". And

* Suet. Cæs. 37.

away drove the dandy, laughing at us, as well he might, for a parcel of simpletons, for proposing such a question; and convinced in his own mind that the Romans were little better, if they really drove four-a-breast, as we pretended.

That the Via Sacra *did* ascend* to the summit of the Capitol, is, however, a matter of historical fact; although neither our friend the dandy, nor any of the antiquaries, nor yet our own wise heads, could settle how. It is also certain, that it wound round this site of the hill, and indeed no other is accessible, except for foot passengers. I cannot myself see why it might not have gone where the road for carriages now goes, behind the Temple of Concord, (I mean Fortune,) which is a very gentle ascent. However, it is a point not easily settled.

Three roads or streets extended from the west side of the Forum towards the Tiber, the *Via Nova*, the *Vicus Tuscus*, and the *Vicus Jugarius*.† The *Via Nova*, probably so called because made after the draining of the *Velabrum*, lay along the base of the Palatine, and with i the present road from the Church of S. Toto to S. Anastasio is supposed nearly to correspond. The *Vicus Tuscus*, so called from the Etruscans who settled in this valley in the days of Tarquin‡ led from about the centre of this side of the Forum to the Circus Maximus.§ It was called *Turarius* in later times.‖ In it was the statue of the Etruscan Deity Vertumnus. At the north-western corner of the Forum, at the base of the Capitoline Hill, was the *Vicus Jugarius*, so called, according to sage authors, from the altar of Juno *Jugæ*, the goddess who

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* The right of ascending to the Capitol in a carriage was not confined to those who received the honours of a triumph. It was enjoyed by the priests, the vestal virgins, and the statues of the gods. It was conferred on the infamous Agrippina. Tacit. lib. xii. cap. 42.

† These three roads are frequently mentioned by Livy and Tacitus, and are enumerated by Rufus and Victor, in their account of the Fourteen Regions of Rome.

‡ Livy, lib. ii. cap. 9. Tacitus, Ann. lib. iv. cap. 65.

§ Livy, lib. ii. cap. 14.

‖ Horace does not give the inhabitants of this street a very high character. After describing the multifarious fishmongers, fruiterers and perfumers that were congregated here, he says, "Ac Tusci turba impia vici." Lib. ii. Sat. 3.

joined her favoured followers in the yoke of holy matrimony. This *Vicus Jugarius* is supposed to have begun nearly where the Church of S. Maria della Consolazione now stands, and to have ended—it is not exactly settled where.

Of course, there can be no vestige of the memorable Gulf of Curtius, which opened, as we are told, in the centre of the Forum, because it closed upon him. But *something* there was, called the Lake of Curtius, even in the days of the Emperor Galba, because he was killed there;* and into this lake all ranks of the people used to throw a piece of money every year, as a sacrifice to the infernal gods for the health of Augustus.† But this must have related to Curtius the Sabine, who stuck fast in a swamp in the Forum,‡ and who was by some supposed to be identical with the self-immolated Curtius, and by others to be a distinct person: but as this was a disputed point in the days of Livy, we need not pretend to settle it now.

Besides this lake of Curtius and the Lake of Saturna, there was a Lake of Servilius; but indeed, what with the lakes, the gulfs, the groves, the caves, the fig-trees, lotus, and cypress, which we hear of in the Roman Forum,—one would imagine it a romantic solitude, instead of a place crowded, as it was, with temples and tribunes, altars and statues, basilicæ and rostra, shops and exchanges,§ triumphal arches and senate-houses.

There is, indeed, no end to the *contents* of the Forum. For besides all the buildings I have already enumerated, and the still greater number I have not,—the *Pila Horatii*, on which the spoils of the Curiatii were heaped—the rostral column to Caius Duillius, the first Roman who ever gained a naval victory,—all the public tribunals,—the

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* Tacitus, Hist. lib. i.

† Suet. August. 57. Augustus used to beg an alms of the people on one day in every year, as a propitiation to the infernal Deities.

‡ Vide Livy, lib. i., and Plutarch, life of Romulus.

§ The Forum was surrounded with shops, chiefly of bankers, (*Argentariæ Tabernæ*) and with porticos.[a] It is also said to have had two Jani or Exchanges, similar to the arch of Janus Quadrifrontis.

a Livy, lib. xii. cap. 27, and lxxvi. cap. xi.

statue of Horatius Cocles, of the three Fates,* of Castor and Pollux,†—the equestrian statues of Clelia, of Domitian, and fifty more,—the Temple of Apollo,‡ the Temple of Augustus, of Vespasian, and of Hadrian,—the Basilica Opimia, and Sempronia,—temples, in short, without number, and basilicas without end—stood somewhere in the Forum. Nay, the antiquaries believe (for what, in some cases, will they not believe, and in others will they not doubt ?) that at the base of the Palatine Hill alone, stood the Curia, the Comitium, the Basilica Porcia, the Græcostasis, the Temple of Romulus, the Temple of Castor and Pollux, the Temple of Vesta, with the House of the Vestal Virgins, and the Sacred Grove, and the Lake of Juturna,—all these, and more than I can at this moment recollect, in one little corner of the Forum !

To recapitulate all the buildings which are said, even on good authority, to have been contained within it,—since it surpasses the limits of human comprehension to conceive where they found room,—would only be fruitlessly to exhaust your patience, which I must already have severely tried. One conclusion, however, common sense dictates—either that these buildings never did stand here at the same time, or that the limits of the Forum must have been very considerably greater than those at present ascribed to it.

But we must not only find space for the buildings, but for the people. The whole Roman populace seem at times to have been convened here. Here they assembled for the election of inferior priests and magistrates, for the hearing of causes, the trial of accused citizens, and the attendance on popular harangues. It was here, when Scipio was accused by the country he had saved, that, for all reply, he turned towards the Capitol, and called upon his fellow-citizens to follow him to the Temple of Jupiter, "the best and greatest," there to return thanks to the immortal gods, under whose auspices he had, on the anni-

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* Procopius speaks of them as late as the 6th century.

† They stood before the Temple of Jupiter Tonans. Pliny, lib. xxxiv. cap. viii.

‡ Mentioned by Plutarch.

versary of that very day, conquered Hannibal, and delivered Rome. The people followed him with enthusiastic plaudits, and his accuser was left alone.*

It was here, in times of alarm and commotion, they beset the doors of the Senate-house; and here, in the struggle between contending parties, at the election of opposing candidates, or the passing of contested laws, they even found room to fight; it was the frequent theatre of frays, tumults, popular commotions, wounds, and bloodshed.

In the times of the Republic, shows of gladiators were exhibited here to the people, especially at funeral games; and consequently, we may suppose that no small portion of the immense population of Rome was assembled to view a sport they delighted in so much. How, in a space so circumscribed, such buildings stood, and such scenes were acted, it is impossible for us to comprehend. But I must have done. Forgive, if you can, this unconscionable long letter. I do assure you I am not nearly so tiresome as the antiquaries: but this you will find it difficult to believe. Adieu.

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* Livy, Dec. iv. lib. xxxviii. cap. 51.

LETTER XX.

FORUMS OF THE EMPERORS, AND THEIR REMAINS.—FORUM OF JULIUS CÆSAR, OF AUGUSTUS, AND OF NERVA, OR DOMITIAN.—FORUM AND TRIUMPHAL COLUMN OF TRAJAN.—VESPASIAN'S FORUM OF PEACE.—FORUM OF ANTONINUS PIUS.—TRIUMPHAL COLUMN OF MARCUS AURELIUS.—TEMPLE OR BASILICA OF ANTONINUS PIUS.

From the Roman Forum, we must now turn to the Forums of the Emperors, which were chiefly situated to the east of it, and seemed to have formed a sort of chain communicating with each other. The church of St. Adrian is called *in tribus foris*, from the Roman Forum, and the Forums of Cæsar and of Augustus, of which it forms the connecting point. From the title it bears, it would appear that at the time this old church was built, the sites of all the three Forums must have been open and apparent, although those of the two Emperors are now built up with streets and houses, and are no longer distinguishable. The Forum of Cæsar extended from the point where this church now stands to the south, behind the temple of Antoninus and Faustina, to the church of S. S. Cosmo and Damiano—or the Temple of Romulus and Remus—and in the court of that convent are still to be seen some massy walls, said to have formed a part of it, which are the sole vestiges of its former magnificence. The ground alone for the Forum of Cæsar, cost one hundred millions of sesterces, about eight hundred thousand pounds.*

The Forum of Augustus—or the Forum of Mars, as it was called from the splendid temple he erected in it to the avenging God of War†—was immediately behind the spot which the Church of Sta. Martina and S. Luca now occupies, and must have been at the very base, if not upon

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* Suetonius. J. Cæs. 26.

† Mars Ultor.

the Capitoline Hill. It is described by Pliny as one of the most striking places in the city, and it was restored to even more than its original splendour by Hadrian.* Augustus adorned its porticos with the statues of all the Latin and Roman Kings, and of the Heroes and Dictators of the Republic—beginning with Eneas and ending with himself. There are now no remains of it, except some fragments of walls said to have belonged to the *Tabernæ*, or shops, or porticos which encircled this, as well as every other Forum; and which, (though not worth looking at,) are to be seen behind the church, in the dirtiest court I ever was in. Really an antiquary, or rather an antiquity hunter at Rome, ought to have no olfactory nerves.

The ruin called the Temple of Peace, whether or not its claims to that title be allowed, must be considered as fixing the site of Vespasian's Forum of Peace; simply for this reason, that if we deny the said Forum a place here, where else shall we find room for it on the Via Sacra, on which we know that it stood? Therefore, even if we must assign the building in question to a far later age, we must still believe it to have been built in, or on, the Forum of Peace.

Behind it, and probably communicating both with it and with the Forum of Julius Cæsar, was

THE FORUM OF NERVA,

some beautiful remains of which are still to be seen at the *Arco de' Pantani*. They consist of three fluted Corinthian columns, and one pilaster of Parian marble, fifty feet in height, and of the grandest and most perfect style of architecture. They are supposed to have formed part of the beautiful Temple of Nerva,—for every Emperor became a god, as a matter of course,† and consequently had a temple. Nerva's Temple was built and dedicated by Trajan, who also enlarged the Forum; so that it was the work of three Emperors—or Gods; for it was origi-

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* Spartian. in Vit. Hadriani.

† Vespasian once humorously observed when he was sick, "that he felt himself beginning to become a God." Suet. Vesp. 23.

nally begun by Domitian,* continued by Nerva, whose name it bore, and finished by Trajan.†

These noble remains perfectly accord with that grand style of architecture which revived under Trajan's reign, and which was in no respect inferior to that of the Augustan age. They were formerly much more considerable, but they were broken down, and carried away by Paul V. (who is even accused of having purloined seven columns,) in order to ornament his hideous Fontana Paolina on Monte Montorio, where no human eye can now trace their perfection of beauty. But it is most true, that what the Goths spared, the Popes destroyed.

Winkelman observes, that this portico, with the exception of some of the ruins of Palmyra, affords almost a solitary instance of the use of the Grecian border, (the meandres, so common on ancient vases,) as an ornament of the roof or ceiling.

The majestic columns of this edifice which still remain, are flanked by a lofty wall, composed of large masses of Tiburtine stone, joined together without cement, supposed to have originally been a part of the boundary wall of the Forum, and now surmounted by the tower of the adjoining convent.

A wall of precisely the same construction is still to be seen in that part of this Forum which was built by Domitian, in the ruin called the Temple of Minerva, a goddess who was the object of that Emperor's constant and devoted idolatry.‡ This building consists of two marble Corinthian columns in front of this wall, more than half buried beneath the pavement, supporting a frieze richly sculptured with figures emblematical of the arts of Pallas; and in the centre of the perfect and highly ornamented entablature, stands the relievo of the Goddess herself. The massive wall behind the columns has been broken into, to form a little dark dirty shop; and a cooper now

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* Sueton. Domit. 5.

† It was sometimes called Forum Transitorium, because, from its central situation, it was frequently a passage between the other Forums. Lamprid. in Alex. 28.

‡ Vide Suetonius, Domit. 5.—15.

works at his trade beneath the protection of the Goddess of Arts. Yet still, though she stands there to claim it as her own, it is not allowed to be her temple, nor indeed any temple at all.

"It has no constituent part of a temple," say the antiquaries. "Where are the side walls of the Cella? Where the Portico? These columns do not form one. They are merely intended to embellish some particular part of the Forum—perhaps the centre, perhaps the entrance. The wall behind is evidently the boundary wall of the Forum, the same as we see at the *Arco de Pantani;* and as it was begun by Domitian, and consecrated by him to Pallas, there is no difficulty in accounting for her figure, and for the emblematical ones upon the frieze."

Whatever the building may be, the sculpture of the frieze, the whole entablature, and the columns, are beautiful. They are perhaps *too* beautiful, or at least too beautified; and in a style rather too florid for true taste; but the ornaments are strictly correct and appropriate; the only fault is, that they are in excess.

Critics consider this profusion of embellishment to be the distinguishing feature in the works of Domitian's reign. Under Trajan the arts regained their original purity, simplicity, and grandeur; and this true greatness of style characterizes every building of his erection, as we have already seen in the remains of the Temple of Nerva, and may still further observe in

THE FORUM OF TRAJAN,

whither I shall now conduct you.

It is situated still more to the eastward, and is at the base of the Quirinal Hill, a part of which was cut down to form a level for it, as the inscription on the triumphal column records. That magnificent column has given the name of Piazza Trajana to the place in which it stands. But the modern Piazza comprises only a small part of the ancient Forum of Trajan, which extended beyond it in every direction, and now lies buried beneath the mean houses and streets of the modern city. The centre of the Piazza Trajana, around the base of the Triumphal

Column, has, however, been excavated down to the level of the ancient pavement by the French ; and the wonders they brought to light, even by opening this small part of it, make one regret still more deeply that they did not continue their labours till they had restored it to its former bounds ; but this never could have been their intention, for they walled in the space they cleared ; a pretty convincing proof that they did not mean to enlarge it.

And yet, the treasures of antiquity they might reasonably expect to have found, would probably have more than compensated, even in a pecuniary point of view, for the loss of the old houses and useless churches they must necessarily have removed ; at all events, the re-opened Forum of Trajan in its original form, and filled with the relics of its ancient grandeur, would have been in itself invaluable, and a work worthy of the character to which they aspired. The present government unluckily is debarred from prosecuting such a design, for the Head of the church cannot well knock down churches ; but the French, who were troubled with no such scruples of conscience, need not surely have shown so much tenderness for a few old musty shrines, in a city where there are nearly as many churches as houses, and quite as many dead saints as living sinners.

However, we certainly owe them some thanks for what they did, and it is perhaps rather an ungracious return for it to quarrel with them because they did not do more.

Let us descend into the space they cleared. Here we stand amidst the broken, but majestic columns of black oriental granite, once the supports of the *Basilica Ulpia*, which, after being buried for ages, are now arranged in long colonnades ; and shattered as they are, reflect back no faint image of its ancient splendour. We tread upon the beautiful fragments of variegated marble which formed its pavement, and we raise our eyes to that lofty triumphal pillar, the finest in the world, which has seen seventeen centuries of vicissitude pass away, and which still proudly towers in unchanged grandeur, recording in its sculptured rolls the deeds of victorious heroes whose existence is forgotten, and the submission of conquered na-

tions whose names have long since vanished from the earth.

An extremely rare golden medal of the age of Trajan bears on its reverse this Forum. Various descriptions of it have been given by ancient authors, for which poor indeed will be my substitute; all I can promise you is, that if mine be less learned, it shall also be less long.

Of all the Forums of Ancient Rome, this was confessedly the most magnificent. It was built by Apollodorus, that celebrated Greek architect, whom Hadrian afterwards put to death for criticising his plan of the Temple of Venus and Rome.

Every ancient Forum had at least one Temple for the purposes of religion, one Basilica for the administration of public justice, and one Portico for the transaction of business. It does not appear that the Forum of Trajan, or of any other of the Emperors, had more; the Roman Forum alone had several of each.

Unlike the generality of Forums, however, which were surrounded by the buildings, while the middle was left open, as our squares and market-places are built now —the Forum of Trajan had its buildings in the centre, and a wide open space was left around them; the whole was enclosed with a lofty wall, and with arcades.

The entrance,* which was at its most southern extremity, passed under the Triumphal Arch of Trajan;† at the farther extremity stood the Temple of Trajan, with the Triumphal Column in front of it; and in the centre, the *Basilica Ulpia*, the principal building it contained, and one of the most splendid and beautiful which even that age of taste and magnificence could boast.

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* The entrance is supposed to have been nearly at the spot now occupied by the little church of Santa Maria, in Campo Carleo, which stands a little beyond the limits of the present Piazza Trajana, and to the south of it.

† The same arch from which, it is generally supposed, the beautiful columns and bassi relievi were torn, which now adorn the Arch of Constantine. If we may believe Cassiodorus and some other old writers, however, the Triumphal Arch, and the whole Forum of Trajan, were standing in perfect integrity, long after the erection of the Arch of Constantine; and in this case, the fine sculpture we now admire upon the latter must have been the plunder of some arch erected to Trajan in the provinces; for it is not probable that there was ever more than one at Rome, even to this "best of Emperors."

Its length lay from east to west, across the breadth of the present piazza, and it is supposed to have extended beyond it. The entrances were not, as usual, at the end, but at the side ; a variation which was probably dictated by local convenience. The steps that once led up to it may still be traced,* and broken fragments of the solid *Giallo Antico* marble, of which they were composed, are still strewed around.

This Basilica consisted of three naves. That in the centre was supported by columns of *Pavonazzetto* marble, and the two side ones by columns of black oriental granite, with bases and capitals of Parian marble. It is amidst their ruins that we now stand, and at our feet are fragments of the broken shafts of the *Pavonazzetto* columns. The shattered slabs of the same marble, and of *Giallo Antico*, which here and there cover the ground, once formed the richly variegated pavement of this splendid Basilica.

The *Bibliotheca Ulpia*, that celebrated library, placed here by Trajan,† and afterwards removed to the Baths of Diocletian,‡ was contained in two wings, or buildings, attached to the Temple of Trajan, which was situated behind (or on the north side of) the Triumphal Pillar. Its portico was formed of eight immense columns of oriental granite. We measured one of the massive fragments of these which were lying about, and found it six feet in diameter ; it must therefore have been about seventy-two in height. Some broken masses of a cornice and pediment of white marble, of exquisite workmanship, which from their proportions seem to have belonged to the Temple, were piled up round the wall of the excavation. They would be invaluable models to artists.

An inscription was found in the late excavation, which is still preserved here, from which it appears that the column was not erected till a year after the rest of the Forum. On the front, or south side of the column, was a

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* Near that end of the present Piazza (the southern,) the most remote from the Triumphal Column.

† Gell. lib. xi. c. 17. ‡ Vopisc. Prob. 2.

Cavædeum, or open court, enclosed by a double colonnade.

But my feeble description can scarcely give the faintest idea of the unparalleled splendour of this Forum. Besides the famous Equestrian Statue of Trajan, in bronze, which excited the envy and admiration of Constantine—who, on viewing it, uttered the vain wish "that he had such a horse," and was told in return, "that he must first build him such a stable;* it was crowded with statues of marble, of bronze, and of ivory; of the great and the learned; of heroes and of gods.

It can, however, still boast of its proudest ornament,—the Triumphal Column of Trajan,† the finest in the world. You ascend by an easy winding staircase of 185 steps of solid Parian marble, lighted by loop-holes that are scarcely distinguishable from without, to the summit of this noble Triumphal Pillar, where you find yourself just at the toe of St. Peter, whose bronze statue Sixtus V. elevated to this somewhat ludicrous post. The head of the colossal bronze statue of Trajan, which anciently crowned it, was still to be seen in the 16th century, though it has now disappeared. From the top of the column you may see the remains, by courtesy called the Baths of Paulus Æmilius, although there is not the least reason to believe he ever built any baths at all: and these walls are evidently nothing more than a part of the corridor or arcade that encircled this Forum, and here formed its eastern boundary. At a corresponding distance from the column, on the opposite side, similar vestiges were found beneath some old houses, which had apparently formed its western enclosure.

The remains of Trajan were entombed either at the base, or at the summit of his Triumphal Column, for authorities differ on that point, though it seems most pro-

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* Ammian. Marcellin. Hist. lib. xvi.

† It is 128 modern Roman feet, and 144 ancient Roman feet in height. Venuti (vol. i. p. 104,) gives the modern measurement. Eutropius (lib. viii. c. 5,) gives the ancient. The entire shaft of the column is composed of 23 blocks of Grecian marble only. The base and the pedestal have nine blocks, the capital one, and the basement of the statue one, making 34 blocks of marble in all.

bable that it was the former ;* but the golden urn that contained his ashes has long since disappeared.

A little to the north of the Forum of Trajan, was

THE FORUM OF ANTONINUS PIUS,

in the midst of which the Triumphal Column of Marcus Aurelius† still lifts its proud head, entwined with his sculptured roll of victories, challenging comparison with the Pillar of Trajan.

Noble as it is, we must, after careful comparison, pronounce it inferior to that unrivalled monument of art. The bass reliefs cannot be satisfactorily examined upon either of them, by the naked eye, from the minuteness of the scale, the distance at which they are viewed, and the spiral form in which they encompass the shafts from top to bottom. The engravings from them alone give a clear idea of them. The figure of *Jupiter Pluvius* is one of the most celebrated and most striking on the Column of Antoninus. The Catholic legend, which tells that this opportune torrent, which ensured victory to the emperor, was, even in his belief, drawn down by the prayers of his Christian soldiers—does not seem to receive much support from the honour of it being thus given to the watery Jove.

The inscriptions we now see on the pedestal of this column are modern, and were inscribed upon it by Sixtus V. when he recased it with marble. In these it is stated, that this column was dedicated by Marcus Aurelius to Antoninus Pius ; an assertion in which I suspect his Holiness had neither authority nor probability to support him. There was *a* column indeed, dedicated by M. Aurelius and Lucius Verus, to Antoninus Pius, but it was an immense obelisk, of red granite, with a pedestal of white marble, which was dug up in the reign of Clement XI., and employed by Pius VI. in the repair of that obelisk which now stands on Monte Citorio ; but this triumphal

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* Cassiodorus and Eutropius both say "*sub* columnâ."

† All modern measurements make this column 175 Italian feet in height. Venuti, vol. ii. p. 106.

column, which records the martial glory of the philosophic emperor, was dedicated to himself alone.

There are no other remains of this Forum, excepting the eleven beautiful Corinthian columns of Grecian marble, which have been converted, with so much taste and judgment, into the Custom-house, and are so ingeniously built up in its vile modern wall, that scarcely one half of them are visible. There can be no excuse, either for the French or the Pope, in not having removed this vile *Dogana* to some one of the multifarious vacant tenements with which Rome abounds,—knocked down this hideous fabric, and restored the imprisoned columns to light and beauty.

Like most other ruins, this colonnade has passed through a variety of appellations; but as it stands in what was the ancient Forum of Antoninus Pius, it is supposed either to have belonged to the Basilica, or to have formed one side of the Peripteral Temple he erected to himself. A singular excess of piety certainly! I wonder if it was this egotistical worship that procured him the agnomen? But Antoninus Pius is not the only emperor who made himself a god while yet upon the earth. That diabolical madman, Caligula, built a temple to himself upon the Palatine, and had serious intentions of making his horse as well as himself, the object of worship;* not to mention that he made a common practice of knocking off the heads of the statues of the gods, and affixing his own ruffian countenance in their stead. Among the number of these decapitated statues was the celebrated Jupiter Olympias, which was brought from Greece to Rome for this express purpose, together with many of the finest masterpieces of Grecian sculpture.† We know from Tacitus that there was a temple to the deified Claudius, even in Britain, which stood near the Thames, on the scene of that memorable defeat the Roman army sustained from our ancestors. We are indeed assured, that Tiberius, in one instance at least, declined the offered honour; so also did Augustus;‡ but notwithstanding their modesty, temples

* Suetonius, C. Cal. † Suet. Cai. Caligula, 22. ‡ Suet. Aug. 52.

and altars were erected to them, and to all the Cæsars, and their statues were carried in the sacred processions with those of the gods, even during their lifetime. Some of them, indeed, were perhaps right in taking care they should be adored while they were alive, since they were sure of being execrated after they were dead. But, even in republican times, Proconsuls, and Prætors, while in their several provinces, had the right to receive divine honours and to have temples erected to them.* Divine worship was paid to Sejanus, the infamous favourite of Tiberius, who himself officiated at the rites in his own temples—at once God and Priest.†

The sight of the stupendous columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius, which alone stand triumphant over time, while the proud trophies of a long list of tyrants are laid low in the dust, make us involuntarily admire the poetical justice displayed in the perfect preservation of those sublime monuments of the best and greatest emperors Rome ever produced ; the sole, who deserved the victor's laurel, and the civic crown ;—who united the praise of pre-eminent virtue to that of military glory ;—and who, on a throne too often sullied with every vice and every crime that can disgrace human nature, were at once the conquerors of distant nations, and the fathers of their people.

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* Vide Hist. de l'Art. Liv. vi. cap. 5. § 2.
† Tacitus Ann. lib. iv. cap. 37, 38.

LETTER XXI.

FORUM BOARIUM—JANUS QUADRIFRONTIS—LITTLE ARCH TO SEPT. SEVERUS—THE CLOACA MAXIMA AND FOUNTAIN OF JUTURNA.

In a deserted and lonely situation, and on a damp and grass-grown spot which was once the *Forum Boarium*, or cattle market of Rome, stands the magnificent ruin of *Janus Quadrifrontis*. It received its name from having four similar fronts, in each of which there is an arch of entrance; it is, therefore, somewhat inaccurately styled *an* arch, for it consists of four arches, and, in technical language, perhaps, it would be more properly termed a *Compitum*.*

It is the only one now remaining of the many *Jani* of Ancient Rome, which were common in every Forum, or market-place, to shelter the people from the sun and rain; and were, in short, exactly what exchanges, or market houses, are in the busy parts of our towns.

But widely does this differ in magnificence. It is built of immense blocks of Grecian marble, now so darkened and discoloured by time, that they look like aged and lichen-covered stone; but their gray and sober hues accord far better with its present ruinous and desolate appearance, than would all the bright polish of recent finish. I know few ruins more picturesque and venerable than this. Its niches are empty; its statues, its pillars, its sculptured monuments, are all destroyed; and wild weeds, thick matted bushes, and aged ivy, wave luxuriantly from its top, and cling to its gray walls.

During the long and bloody struggles of the domestic wars waged by the Roman barons in the dark ages, it was

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* So say Forsyth and many other authorities. A Compitum, however, was generally erected where four roads met,—but that indeed may have been the case here.

turned into a fortress by the Frangipani family, who erected the brick walls that we now see in ruins on its summit. That this arch is a work of Imperial Rome, there can be no doubt, but the date of its erection is purely conjectural. By many it has been attributed to Domitian, and it is certain he built a great number of magnificent *Jani* in various parts of the city. Others, judging from its style of architecture, pronounce it a work of later times.

The *Forum Boarium*, in which it stands, almost adjoined the Roman Forum, on the side nearest the Tiber, to the banks of which, however, it did not extend. It occupied a part of what was the *Velabrum*, or marsh, and which indeed, though drained ever since the days of Tarquin, still bears that name. The old church which stands here is called S. Georgio *in Velabro*. By its side there is a little insignificant arch of marble, erected, as its inscription testifies, by the trades-people and bench keepers of this Forum, to the Emperor Severus. It serves at once as a monument of their adulation and of their bad taste. The design is mean, and the sculpture barbarous. On one side is represented Sept. Severus as high priest, in the act of sacrificing, with his wife Julia by his side. On the other is Caracalla, as a boy; but not a trace remains of the figure of Geta; a blank appears where it has been; for his name, his image, every thing relative to him, were effaced both from this arch, from the larger one in the Forum, and from every public monument, by command of his brother and his murderer.*

Did he expect thus to erase the remembrance of his guilty fratricide?

I was assured that, on the side of the arch, there is the figure of a man ploughing with a bull and a cow, in commemoration of the tradition that it was from this point Romulus† set out to trace the furrow round the Palatine Hill, which then described the boundaries of his infant

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* It is related that this was done under the pretence of sparing his tender feelings, and that this detestable hypocrite used to affect to weep at the sight of any memento of his beloved brother.

† Tacitus, Ann. lib. xii. c. 23.

city ;* but the sculpture was so defaced I could not make it out.

Below the figures of the Imperial family are sculptured the different instruments used in sacrifice.† We were a good deal amused to see them nearly the same as those in present use in the Catholic church. The *galerus*, or cap worn by the *Flamen*, differs little from the mitre of the bishop ; the *simpulum* and the *aspergillum* for the lustral water, resemble the basin and brush for the holy water ; the *accerra*, or incense-box, is now the censer ; and the consecrated cake of Pagan sacrifice, is supplied by the consecrated wafer of high mass.

Solomon wisely said, " there was nothing new under the sun ;" and what is a *præfericulum* but a classical term for a jug ; or a *patera*, but a more refined term for a saucer ; and in what, after all, does holy water differ from lustral water, or saints from deified men : or the worship of images now, from that of statues formerly ; or the sanctuaries of churches from the sanctuaries of temples ; or modern excommunication from the ancient interdiction from fire and water ; or the Catholic from the Pagan rites ?

But however close the similitude may be between their forms, I could not help feeling that their spirit is still widely different, and that even the gross corruptions of men had not had power to vitiate the divine influence of that religion which was derived from Heaven—when in the midst of my flippant observations upon the Catholic worship, a tremendous proof of the horrors of Paganism, of which this very spot was the scene, suddenly recurred to my remembrance.

It was in this very Forum Boarium that the Romans twice offered up living sacrifices !—Two Gauls and two Greeks, a man and a woman of each nation, were twice buried alive here ; first, during a war with the Gauls, and then during the second punic war, in compliance with the Sibylline books—or rather in order to elude one of the pre-

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* It was from the circular furrow ploughed round the site of a new city, that a town was called *orbs* and then *urbs*.

† These may also be seen on the frieze of the Temple of Jupiter Tonans.

dictions they contained, which was, "that Gauls and Greeks should possess the City;" and in this way, by burying alive some of each nation, they pretended they were put in possession of it! As if the gods could be thus juggled out of their irreversible decrees!

Thus eight human victims, innocent of crime, suffered the most cruel of punishments, to satisfy the guilty and barbarous superstition of the enlightened Romans. This horrible fact would be wholly incredible, if it were not supported by the authority of their own historians.*

There are no other remains of antiquity contained within the limits of this Forum, but there is one close to it, to which I shall now conduct you—the *Cloaca Maxima*, unquestionably the most ancient of all the ruins of Rome, and the only vestige of the work of her kings.

It was built by Tarquinius Superbus, and served not only as a common sewer to cleanse the city, but as a drain to the *Velabrum* through which it passed.

This work was begun by Tarquinius Priscus, who "drained the low grounds of the city about the Forum, and the valleys lying between the hills, (the Palatine and Capitoline) by Cloacæ, which were carried into the Tiber.†

But the drain was imperfect, and the *Cloaca Maxima* we now see was built by Tarquinius Superbus.‡ It crossed the Roman Forum beneath the level of the pavement; and, in ancient times, it is said the tunnel was so large, that a wagon loaded with hay could pass through it. Now, all that we see of it is the upper part of a gray massy arch of peperin stone, as solid as the day it was built, through which the water almost imperceptibly flows. Though choked up nearly to its top by the artificial elevation of the surface of Modern Rome, it is curious to see it still serving as the common sewer of the city, after the lapse of nearly three thousand years.§

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* It is recorded by Livy, and by Plutarch in his life of Marcellus.

† Livy, lib. i. cap. 38. ‡ Ibid. lib. i. cap. 56.

§ Some architects, in order to support their improbable theory, that the construction of the arch was not known even in Greece (where the art had reached a perfection it will never more attain) till about a hundred years before the Christian era, have attempted to controvert the antiquity of this stupendous work, and attribute it to a much later period. But if it

When the Tiber, into which it flows, is flooded, the water in the Cloaca is driven back so as to rise above the key-stone of the arch, and hide it from view. When the Tiber is low, not only this arch, but also the arch through which it discharges its sordid flood into the river, may be seen from the Ponte Rotto; or, still more distinctly, from the river itself.

Almost close to the Cloaca Maxima, we were shown the far-famed Fountain of Juturna,—that nymph on whom Jupiter thus conferred immortality. If this really be that transformed fair one, she has met with that neglect which

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had really been rebuilt—as a late learned antiquary chose to imagine—by Augustus, would it have escaped the notice of Suetonius? or would Livy, that minute and accurate historian, who extols its grandeur and antiquity, and carefully chronicles the erection of every temple and basilica, have failed to record such a work as this, which must have been executed before his own eyes, and by the very prince in whose court he was living? But, on the contrary, he expressly says, "that Tarquin made the great Subterranean *Cloaca* to carry off the filth of the city, a work so vast, that even the magnificence of the present age has not been able to equal it? (Livy, lib. i. cap. 56.) Pliny also, who records its repair in the age of Augustus, expressly says, that after 800 years this *opus omnium maximum* continued as strong as when first built by Tarquin. (Plin. lib. xxxvi. cap. 15.) It may indeed seem incredible, that the Romans in that rude age should have been capable of executing such a noble piece of architecture; but Livy tells us, "that Tarquin sent for artists from all parts of Etruria," for this and his other public works. Nothing can be clearer than this evidence of the Cloaca Maxima being the work of the Tarquins; and its denial only affords one of the many proofs, that antiquaries will pervert or overlook facts, when they interfere with their favourite theories. The Cloaca, therefore, is doubly interesting, not only from its extraordinary grandeur and antiquity; but from being perhaps the sole, and certainly the finest remains of Etruscan architecture that have come down to our times. With respect to the date of the introduction of the arch, since it was practised at this early period by the Etruscans, we cannot suppose it unknown to the Greeks. The earliest specimens extant of the arch, indeed, are formed in a very simple manner, by the inclination of two long blocks of stone erected on the lintels, and inclined till they meet each other in an angle, something like our small Gothic pointed arch. This occurs in one of the chambers of the great pyramid in Egypt, and in gateways among the ruins of Mycenæ in Greece, and also in the massy Cyclopean walls of the fortress of Tyrinthus, (which is built in the form of a ship,) situated on the road between Nauplia and Mycenæ, in which a vaulted passage of considerable length is arched in this manner throughout its whole extent. But the wide circular arches of the Cloaca Maxima are regularly built with the vault, key-stone, &c. and as entire as if finished yesterday. So also is the arch of the Emissarium of the Alban lake, built four hundred years before the Christian era, and consequently three hundred before the period of the invention of the arch, according to these theorists. The arch of Fabius at Rome, too, and several more, must have preceded it considerably.

is too frequently the lot of aged ladies; for the waters, which in her more youthful years were held sacred, and used only for the holy sacrifices of Vesta, now flow forgotten; and while a thousand fountains in Rome throw up streams unknown to fame, none has been erected for the classic source of Juturna.* I tasted of the "crystal wave," and fancied it particularly fine.

LETTER XXII.

THE PANTHEON.

Rome presents no greater attraction to the stranger than the Pantheon, now the Rotonda, one of the largest and most beautiful temples of antiquity; the boast of the Romans themselves in the proudest era of their arts, and perhaps the only pagan temple in the world, which, after eighteen centuries have passed away, still preserves its primeval form and its ancient grandeur.

The beautiful solitude which surrounds the Colosseum, adds a secret charm to the pleasure we feel in surveying it. Not so the Pantheon. Its situation, on the contrary, tends as much as possible to dissolve the spell that hangs over it. It is sunk in the dirtiest part of Modern Rome; and the unfortunate spectator, who comes with a mind filled with enthusiasm to gaze upon this monument of the taste and magnificence of antiquity, finds himself surrounded by all that is most revolting to the senses, distracted by incessant uproar, pestered with a crowd of clamorous

* We may still—as when the nymph is last recorded to have spoken from the blue waters of her Alban lake—fancy we hear her thus complain of old Jupiter:—

——"Hæc pro virginitate reponit!
Quo vitam dedit æternam? cur mortis ademta est
Conditio?
O quæ satis alta dehiscat
Terra mihi, Manisque deam demittat ad imos!"—Æn. lib. xii. 878.

beggars, and stuck fast in the congregated filth of every description that covers the slippery pavement; so that the time he forces himself to spend in admiring its noble portico, generally proves a penance from which he is glad to be liberated, instead of an enjoyment he wishes to protract.

We escaped none of these nuisances except the mud, by sitting in an open carriage to survey it; the smells and the beggars were equally annoying. You may perhaps form some idea of the situation of the Pantheon at Rome, by imagining what Westminster Abbey would be in Covent-Garden Market:—but I wrong Covent-Garden by such a parallel. Nothing resembling such a hole as this could exist in England; nor is it possible that an English imagination can conceive a combination of such disgusting dirt, such filthy odours and foul puddles, as that which fills the vegetable market in the Piazza della Rotonda at Rome. Still, while I gazed upon the beauty of the Pantheon itself, I could not but remember that this noble monument of taste and magnificence was already built in those times when our savage ancestors still roamed through their native forests, scarcely raised above the level of the beasts they chased; their very name unknown to all the world besides, excepting to the Romans, by whom they were considered in much the same light as the South-Sea Islanders are by us.

The beauty of the Pantheon is as honourable to the ancient Romans, as its filth is disgraceful to the moderns. But its present state of dirt and degradation is nothing to that from which it has emerged. There was a time when it was built round with beggarly hovels, when the very columns themselves, the admiration of every age, were walled up: and the portico, thus enclosed, was filled with stalls, booths, and hucksters' shops. Pope Eugenius the Fourth, about the middle of the fifteenth century, turned these "money-changers and dove-sellers out of the temple," and freed the imprisoned columns.

In far more guilty profanation, and even after its consecration as a church, it was converted into a temporary fortress during the furious struggle between popes and anti-popes, in the eleventh century; and thus the very

temple sacred to the worship of Him who brought "peace on earth," and shed his blood for man, was converted into the engine of war and carnage by his pretended representatives. The donation of the Pantheon for a Christian church, by the Emperor Phocas, and its consecration as such by Boniface Fourth,* seem to have afforded it no defence against the subsequent spoliations both of Emperors and Popes. The plates of gilded bronze that covered the roof, the bronze bassi relievi of the pediment, and the silver that adorned the interior of the dome, were carried off by Constans II. (A. D. 655,) who destined them for his imperial palace at Constantinople; but being murdered at Syracuse when on his return with them, they were conveyed by their next proprietors to Alexandria; and thus the spoils of the Pantheon, won from the plunder of Egypt after the battle of Actium, by a kind of poetical justice, reverted to their original source. Urban the Eighth carried off all that was left to purloin—the bronze beams of the portico, which amounted in weight to more than forty-five millions of pounds. He records his plunder with great complacency in an inscription on the walls of the Portico, as if it were a meritorious deed; seeming to pride himself on having melted it down into the frightful tabernacle of St. Peter's, and the useless cannon of the Castle of St. Angelo.† Urban, who was one of the Barberini family, also gave a share of it to his nephew for the embellishment of the Barberini Palace; and this gave rise to the pasquinade,

"Quod non fecerunt Barbari Romæ, fecit Barberini."

But he did more mischief by adding than by taking away, for he bestowed upon it the deformity of two hideous belfries, as a perpetual monument of his bad taste.

The only meritorious action he performed was, replacing one of the three vanished columns of the Por-

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* A. D. 609.—Vide Platina's Life of that Pontiff.

† Besides this modern inscription in commemoration of its spoliation, there are two ancient inscriptions, one of which records its erection by Agrippa, the other its restoration by Septimius Severus and Caracalla.

tico, which is marked on the capital with his bee. The other two were restored by Pope Alexander VII. and are graced with the star of the house of Chigi. These three columns are ancient, and are said to have been taken from the ruins of the Baths of Nero, over which were built the neighbouring Palazzo Giustiniani, and the Church of S. Luigi de Francesi. Scarcely any difference or inferiority can be discerned between the supplied and the proper columns of the Portico. They are all of the Corinthian order, about forty-two feet English in height, and formed of the red granite of Elba, with white marble capitals, encircled with the graceful foliage of the acanthus. They are sixteen in number; eight in front, and eight behind.

The two niches beside the door-way contained the statues of M. Agrippa* and Augustus.

That the body of the Rotonda itself is of earlier erection than the Portico,—that it was built for a Thermal Hall, Caldarium, Tepidarium, Vestibule, or—something belonging to the Public Baths of Agrippa,—and that the Portico was afterwards added in order to convert it into a temple—antiquaries seem at last to have generally agreed. We observed, that the brick cornice of the Rotonda is continued quite round the body of the building; and it would undoubtedly have been broken off where the Portico commenced, if that had formed a part of the original plan.

Beautiful as the Pantheon is, it is not what it was. During eighteen centuries it has suffered from the dilapidations of time, and the cupidity of barbarians. The seven steps which elevated it above the level of Ancient Rome, are buried beneath the modern pavement. Its Rotonda of brick is blackened and decayed; its leaden dome, overlooked by the modern cupolas of every neighbouring church, boasts no imposing loftiness of elevation; the plates of "glittering bronze" that once covered it have been torn away; the marble statues, the bassi relievi, the brazen columns, have disappeared; its orna-

* The only statue extant of M. Agrippa, which is now at the Palazzo Grimani at Venice, is believed to have been this identical statue.

ments have vanished ; its granite columns have lost their lustre, and its marble capitals their purity ; all looks dark and neglected, and its splendour is gone for ever. Time has robbed it of the gloss and polish that can cheat the eye and trick the senses, or varnish over faults of taste with richness of decoration Yet, under every disadvantage, it is still beautiful—pre-eminently beautiful. No eye can rest on the noble simplicity of that matchless portico without admiration, and without feeling what is so rarely felt, that there is nothing wanting to desire, nothing committed to rectify. In viewing it, the eye does not feel that restless wish to remove one thing, to add another, to alter, to improve, that so often haunts it in looking even at fine buildings. It rests upon it with the fulness of satisfaction. It is the pure and perfect architecture, the greatness of design, the harmony, the simplicity, and the imposing majesty of the whole, that command our never satiated admiration, our approbation, and our praise. Its beauty is of that sort, which, while the fabric stands, time has no power to destroy.

Can we say the same of St. Peter's?

But we linger too long at the threshold; let us pass through its open gates of ancient bronze, and enter the temple. How beautiful the proportions, how perfect the symmetry, how noble the design! The eye takes in at once the whole majesty of its magic circle, glances over the lofty columns of ancient marble that divide its parts, and, rising from the variegated pavement on which we tread, rests on that swelling dome whose top is open to the clear blue sky, and through which the light seems to descend uninterrupted in its purest ray from heaven.*

Who does not experience an elevation of soul in this ancient temple of the gods? Who does not feel that man, who formed it, is allied to the divinity whom he here adores, and whose presence still seems to fill it? Be it

"Jehovah, Jove, or Lord,"

it is still the same ; the one, great, and only God, that inhabiteth eternity.

* The Pantheon is 132 feet in height ; the same in diameter ; and 396 feet in circumference.

How the long protracted dispute about the god or gods to whom it was dedicated ever arose among the antiquaries, or why it is continued, I am at a loss to conceive, since Pliny, who must know more about it than they do, expressly says it was dedicated to Jupiter the Avenger.* If, therefore, it was ever destined by the adulation of Agrippa to the sole glory of Augustus, the honour must have been declined by his modesty or piety.† The name, the form, tradition, or some other cause, has given rise to the popular belief that it was dedicated to Jupiter, and all the gods of antiquity; but of this there is no proof; and it is inconsistent with the known principles of pagan religion, which forbade a temple to be dedicated to more than one divinity;‡ and enjoined, that even when vowed to two, as in the case of Virtue and Honour, Venus and Rome, Isis and Serapus, &c. a double temple should be raised, and one altar serve for their united worship. There was indeed one species of temple, a *Delubrum*, which might be devoted to the worship of several Deities at once; and thus, though a temple could only be *dedicated* to one god,§ it might contain small Ædiculæ, or Chapels, for the worship of others; as the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, although dedicated to himself alone, contained the Ædicolæ of Juno and Minerva, and the Altar of Terminus;‖ just as Catholic Churches are dedicated to the Virgin, or some particular saint, but have small side chapels appropriated to others. Indeed, the recesses and niches around the Pantheon, which are now sanctified in this way, are similar in form, though inferior

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* Jupiter Ultor, the designation of the god, was obviously given in allusion to the battle of Actium, which, as an ingenious friend once observed to me, was the only naval engagement that ever decided the fate of an empire. It was, in another point of view, a memorable battle, if, as Tacitus affirms, Rome, after that victory, never produced a single great genius.

† Dio Cassius, lib. liii. cap. 22.

‡ Vide Plutarch—Life of Marcellus.

§ We hear of one temple, near the Circus Maximus, being dedicated to Bacchus, Ceres, and Proserpine.—Tacitus, Ann. lib. ii. cap. 49. How this was reconciled to Pagan etiquette, is not explained.

‖ Vide Livy, lib. iii. cap. 15, and lib. vi. cap. 4. Dionys. lib. iv. cap. 61.

in magnitude, to the great one fronting the door, where the image of Jupiter must have stood, and thé High Altar now appears, and seem to indicate that they were formerly the Ædicolæ of pagan gods.

If the antiquaries had been left to themselves to find out to what deity this temple belonged, I make no doubt they would have assigned it to Vesta, from its circular form and the aperture in the centre of the roof, both of which were proper to the temples of that goddess. Indeed, it is a favourite position with some of the leading antiquaries of the present day, that such an opening was *peculiar* to her temples ;* and they get over the difficulty of finding it here by maintaining, that it was made when the Rotonda was intended for a hall of Agrippa's Baths, and that when converted into a temple, it was closed up with a colossal pine cone of bronze, (similar to one which is now in the Belvidere garden in the Vatican ;) and such a pine, they pretend, stood in the Piazza della Rotonda in the eleventh century.

Certainly, the name of a neighbouring church,—S. Giuseppe *della Pigna*—seems to corroborate the idea that there was a pine hereabouts; but then we have nothing but the lively imagination of antiquaries in support of the opinion that it was used to close up this orifice. Pliny, whose account of every part of the Pantheon is most minute, never mentions it; and the pavement, which is of the date of Sep. Severus's reign, has a drain below the aperture to carry off the rain water, which, had it been closed, would have been unnecessary.

But whatever may be the general opinion on this head, these learned gentlemen inculcate one doctrine, which seems manifestly absurd; viz. that the people were never allowed to enter the door of a temple, and that priests alone possessed that privilege.

Have they then forgotten that the Curia and the Rostra were consecrated as temples,—that it was not lawful for the Senate to convene, except in places consecrated as

* And yet they might have found, in Livy's description of the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, (lib. i. cap. 51.) that the God Terminus could not be worshipped without an aperture in the roof.

temples—and that they frequently held their meetings in the most sacred temples of the gods? And granting the improbable supposition that all the nine hundred senators* were priests;—were all the conspirators leagued with Cataline, whom they tried in the Temple of Concord,—all the foreign ambassadors, whom they received in the Temple of Bellona,—all the Roman virgins, who learnt their hymns in the Temple of Jupiter Stator,†—all the rejoicing crowds, who filled the temples to give thanks for the victory of Scipio Africanus over Hannibal,‡—and all the weeping suppliants, who burst open the doors of the temples at midnight, to offer supplications and thanks for the imaginary safety of the idolized Germanicus,§—were all these priests also? And was this magnificent building, with its lofty columns, its beautiful statues, its inlaid walls, and its pavement of the rarest marbles, never beheld but by the eyes of priests?

I would not believe it,—no,—not if all the antiquaries in Rome were to swear it to me. At the same time I am willing to credit any thing in reason, and by no means wish to get into a quarrel with them. It is certain, that the Cella of every temple, excepting those of Vesta, was generally dark, and lighted by lamps only; and it is very singular, that this, which was dedicated to Jupiter, should have an aperture at the top at all,‖ and that having such an aperture, the bronze gate above the door should be perforated, since it could neither be necessary for light or ventilation.

But these inconsistencies I leave to be cleared up by abler heads than mine. In the meantime, I am growing

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* They were reduced by Augustus from nine to six hundred.

† Livy, lib. xxviii. cap. 36.

‡ Livy, lib. xxx. cap. 40. At chap. 17. of the same book Livy mentions, that the Prætor decreed that the temples should be opened, and the people be at liberty to enter them and return thanks to the Gods.

§ When the cry of "*Salva Roma, Salva Patria, Salvus est Germanicus!*" rung even in the affrighted ears of the moody tyrant. Vide Tacitus—Annals of Tiberius's reign. I cannot remember chapter and verse; but the breaking open of the Temple doors is mentioned by the historian in speaking of the enthusiasm of the people at the false tidings of his recovery, before he describes their unparalleled affliction at his death.

‖ If I am not much mistaken, however, Vitruvius somewhere says, that the temple of Jupiter had an aperture in the roof.

(for me) very learned, and consequently very dull; and, therefore, I will only observe, that the original gates of the Pantheon are said to have been carried off by Genseric during the sack of Rome by the Vandals; but the present gates are also ancient, and are supposed to have been taken from some other Roman building.

Over the whole of this once magnificent interior, the marks of age and neglect, and slow consuming time, are now but too apparent. Its brilliance, if not its beauty, has vanished. The sculptured silver that embossed its roof, the statues that filled its niches,* and the famed Caryatides of Syracusan bronze that sustained its attic,† are all gone; and perhaps it is not less the remembrance of what it once was, than the sight of what it now is, that touches our feelings while we linger within its walls. Its four grand recesses, each supported by two magnificent columns, and two pilasters of giallo antico, are truly beautiful; but the eight little cavities, or altar-places between them, with ugly pediments, and paltry little porphyry pillars, are wretchedly mean, and in a taste very unlike the grandeur of the rest of the edifice. Their date is ascribed to the reign of Septimius Severus, who not only repaired, but altered this noble building. The present pavement is also supposed to be his; indeed, the quantity of porphyry it contains is one proof of it, for it is a curious fact, that it was a substance, the use of which was very rare in the best ages, but which gradually increased as taste declined.

Eighteen centuries have left their traces—and more than all, their dirt behind; most grievous, indeed, is it to see the filthy state in which it is kept; and if I might be allowed to come in with an heretical mop, I should have a pleasure in scouring it at my own expense, and almost with my own hands; and restoring to its marble columns, and walls, and pavement, no inconsiderable portion of their

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* Among the number of statues in the Pantheon, was a Venus, adorned with ear-rings made of a split pearl;—the twin sister of that which Cleopatra dissolved and [illegible] at the banquet with Mark Antony. Macrob. lib. xi. cap. 13.

† The work of the Grecian sculptor Diogenes. Vide Pliny.

ancient freshness and brilliancy. It is inconceivable what a renovation might be made by soap and water. That it has never been washed since it was a Christian place of worship, is a lamentable fact. Catholics seem to think that there is a great sanctity in dirt. The only attempt towards cleanliness that has ever been made,—that of whitewashing the roof, had better have been spared.

Behind the altars that crowd the principal recesses, are placed, on shelves, the busts of the most distinguished poets, artists, and philosophers of modern Italy; a generous tribute offered by the unaided munificence of Canova, to the kindred departed spirits of his country. But the littleness of busts, and the minuteness of their arrangement on shelves, do not suit the grandeur of the character of this place. We wish to see it once more adorned with noble statues—and we wish, oh, how vainly! to banish all the trumpery shrines that insult, with their tawdry tinsel, this glorious edifice! It may seem ungrateful to quarrel with the very instruments that unquestionably saved it from destruction; but to see the dusty altars, frippery Madonnas, and faded old artificial flowers that lumber up the recesses—the pasteboard figures of saints that fill the attic niches above, or the loathsome living objects that crawl about the marble pavements below—and not to exclaim against popes, popery, and priesthood—surpasses human patience!

I verily believe these beggars live here; for ever are we persecuted with the same horrible objects, and assailed with the same doleful whine of—"*Qualche cosa per l'amore di Dio!*"

Why did not the French, who had no great respect for altars, and never encouraged beggars, clear it out of all these nuisances?

Why did they not convert it, as its name would seem to indicate, into a temple sacred to the illustrious dead?

The taste of Canova would have dictated this great improvement, which has been long and ardently desired. Indeed, the preservation and embellishment of the Pantheon have seemed to be dear to every mind of genius, in every age. Raphael bequeathed a sum of money for its repair; so did Annibal Caracci, and many other distin-

guished artists; but it appears all to have gone to the Madonna and the martyrs; to priests and masses.

Many of those whose names reflected lustre upon Modern Italy in her proudest days, are interred here.

The mortal remains of Raphael, and that last and noblest work of his genius—the Transfiguration,—were placed together in the church for three successive days after his untimely death, and admired and mourned by thousands. Here, too, he was buried; but in vain I inquired for his tomb; in vain I sought it through the Rotonda; no traces of it met the eye, nor could one of the Italians who were present show me where it was to be found!

> "And what—no monument, inscription, stone,
> The very earth that wraps his grave unknown?"

I returned afterwards to the Pantheon with a friend, who pointed out to me the stone beneath which his remains repose; no tomb has been raised over it. His bust, among the undistinguished crowd, upon a shelf above the neighbouring altar, is the only tribute paid to his memory in the city that was embellished by his genius, and honoured with his dust. Beneath it is inscribed Cardinal Bembo's famous distich:

> "Ille hic est Raphael, timuit quo sospite vinci
> Rerum magna parens, quo moriente mori."*

It has been very faithfully translated into Italian; and I have attempted (upon the spur of the moment only) something like it in English:

> Nature, in life, saw thee herself outvie,
> Yet, Raphael! fear'd, in death with thee to die.

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* The author was not aware, until after the first edition of this work was published, that Pope has imitated, or rather translated these verses, without acknowledgment, in his epitaph on Sir Godfrey Kneller. It was, however, probably *his* lines which unconsciously suggested her own. Pope's couplet is as follows:

> "Living great Nature feared he might outvie
> Her works; and dying, fears herself to die."

LETTER XXIII.

TEMPLES.—REPUTED TEMPLE OF VESTA.—PUDICITIA PATRICIA.—BOCCA DELLA VERITA.—ARA MAXIMA.—TEMPLE OF FORTUNA VERILIS.—OF ANTONINUS AND FAUSTINA.—OF ROMULUS AND REMUS.—OF PEACE.—ANCIENT STYLES OF BUILDING.—DOUBLE TEMPLE OF VENUS AND ROME.—TEMPLE OF MINERVA MEDICA.—OF VENUS AND CUPID.—OF VENUS ERYCINA.

From the Pantheon, I must now carry you to the Temple of Vesta, for such is the name the antiquaries of yore were pleased to give to a beautiful little temple near the Tiber, and such is the name it still bears, in despite of the antiquaries of the present day, who are now waging fierce battles about the different gods and goddesses to whom it might, could, or ought to have belonged. The claims of Phœbus and Venus; of Portumnus, God of the Port, and Volupia, whose image, treading Virtue under foot, was certainly worshipped somewhere at Rome—very little to the credit of the Romans—have at various times been brought forward; but at present the contest seems to lie between Hercules and Vesta. The Goddess has at least possession in her favour, and the defenders of her ancient rights maintain that hers it must be, because it was circular, and all the temples of Vesta were circular; and because it had windows, and the temples of Vesta alone had windows; and because it had an aperture at the top, and no other temple had an aperture at the top. (Now, you will please to observe, that the temple has no top at all.) The assailants, on the other hand, dispute the antiquity of the windows—deny the aperture at the top—bring Pliny to prove that the Temple of Hercules was circular also, and that it stood somewhere hereabouts—and wonder how any body can doubt that this is the temple of Hercules.

To the confusion of these *Heraclidæ*, the party of Vesta again bring weighty testimony to show that the Temple of Hercules stood in the Forum Boarium—that the limits of that Forum did not nearly extend to this spot; and since, therefore, it is not the Temple of Hercules, they conceive that it must indubitably be that of Vesta.

What, amid such contradictory assertions, are those who know nothing of the matter to believe?

> "Who shall decide when doctors disagree,
> And *antiquaries* doubt—like *Rè* and *Nibby* ?"

For my part, I shall not "halt between the two opinions," being firmly convinced that it was neither the one nor the other. For, as to the Temple of Hercules, which stood "somewhere hereabouts," so did fifty other temples beside; and, as to the Temple of Vesta, there is not a shadow of reason to believe that it ever stood here at all; or, indeed, that there ever was any Temple of Vesta at Rome, except the ancient one originally built by Numa, and which unquestionably stood at the base of the Palatine Hill in the Forum.* All classic authors speak of *the* Temple of Vesta, as if there were only one; and if another had ever been built, we cannot doubt such an event would have been recorded. When Tacitus records that *the* Temple of Vesta was burnt down and rebuilt in the reign of Nero; or when Herodian† relates that it was consumed under Commodus, it is obvious that if there had been more than one temple, they would have particularized which. When the biographer of Heliogabalus relates "the boy Emperor's" sacrilegious irruption into the very *Penus*‡ of Vesta, and robbery of the supposed Palla-

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* Vide Plutarch's Life of Numa Pompilius. Cic. de Divinit. lib. i. cap. 45, &c. It would be easy, though useless, to multiply authorities; but that the Temple of Vesta was neither where this temple stands, nor where the Church of St. Theodore stands, is proved by Statius, who describes the Temple of Vesta as standing opposite to the Temple of Concord, in the Roman Forum. Vide de Equo Domit. ver. 31 to 36.

† Herodian, lib. i. quoted in Foro Romano, p. 78.

‡ Lampridius in Vita Heliogab. cap. vi.—Et in Penum Vestæ quod solæ Virgines solique Pontifices adeunt irrupit pollutus ipse, &c.—*Penus* vocatur locus intimus in æde Vestæ segetibus septus, qui certis diebus circa Vestalia aperitur; ii dies religiosi habentur. Festus in vocc Vestæ.

dium,* he speaks of the Temple of Vesta as if there was one only; indeed, where should they find another Palladium to preserve in it, or other vestals to watch the sacred undying fire that burnt on her altars? When Horace alludes to a flood of the Tiber reaching even to *the* Temple of Vesta,† as a memorable occurrence, it is also clear that he could not mean this temple on the very shore of the river, and almost every year overflowed by its waters, but the Temple of Vesta in the Forum, to which, though a remarkable, it was by no means an unprecedented circumstance that they should reach; for in ancient times many more terrible inundations are recorded; and not to multiply instances, Livy relates that the Tiber overflowed not only the Forum, but all the low grounds of the city, and the whole plain of the Campus Martius, twelve times in one year;‡ and Tacitus records a still more destructive flood, in which Rome was laid under water, and the people drowned in the streets.§ In modern ages, too, in the Pontificate of Clement VII., a flood happened which compelled the inhabitants of Rome to fly in the middle of the night to the highest of her hills.‖

It is, therefore, I think, pretty clearly established, that there never was more than one temple of Vesta at Rome, and that this is not that one. Still, I am of opinion, that since it has got the name of the Temple of Vesta, it should keep it; especially as we have no means of giving it a better, and never now can know what it is.

Be it what it may, it is beautiful. It is entirely built of Parian marble, and its portico is composed of a circular colonnade of twenty fluted Corinthian columns; but the entablature has long since disappeared; and though the French removed the vile modern wall that filled up the

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* A great many were made, as similar to it as possible, that it might not be known.

† Vidimus flavum Tiberim, retortis
Littore Etrusco violenter undis,
Ire dejectum monumenta regis
Templaque Vestæ.

Hor. lib. i. Ode 2.

‡ A. U. 564. Vide Livy, lib. xxxviii.

§ Tacitus, Ann. lib. i. cap. 76.

‖ The Quirinal. Vide Memoirs of Benvenuto Cellini.

intercolumniation, the flat coarse tiled roof that still rests upon the graceful capitals, destroys much of their fine effect.

Within the colonnade, the small circular cella, built also of marble, is now converted into a chapel, dedicated to "La Madonna dell' Sole," (the virgin of the sun,) a curious coincidence with its reputed ancient worship of the virgin Goddess of fire.* This little temple is supposed, from its style, to belong to the age of Domitian.

It stands in that part of ancient Rome, which was called the "*Pulchrum littus*," or "beautiful shore" of the Tiber; but which no longer enjoys or merits that epithet.

Opposite to this beautiful building stands the church of Santa Maria *in Cosmedin*, built on the ruins of *some* ancient temple, certainly; but of what, the antiquaries themselves do not even pretend to know; but they do know that it was not the temple of Pudicitia Patricia, as it is generally called, because there was no such temple; that divinity having only had a *Sacellum*, or, at most, an *Ædicola*. (You will please to remember that an Ædicola was a small covered place of worship, bearing much the same relation to a Pagan temple that a chapel does to a Christian church; and a Sacellum differed from it only in being open.) But the remains of the ruin, entombed within the frightful old church of Santa Maria in Cosmedin, prove that it was a magnificent peripteral temple, with eight columns in front, like the Parthenon; and like that, too, it must have had fifteen at the sides, (counting the angular one both ways,) because the intercolumniations of the sides were always double in number to those of the front. Few of these lateral columns are now visible, but six of the front columns may still be traced, built up in the wall of the church, and two more

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* I need scarcely observe, that Vesta was worshipped both as the earth, and as fire, its fructifying principle. For example: Ovid, in the same poem, identifies her, first with the one, then with the other:

——————Tellus Vestaque numen idem est.
Nec tu aliud Vestam quam vivam intellige flammam.
Fasti. vi. ver. 460 and 291.

are to be seen in the sacristy, to which it is well worth while to ascend, to behold the beautiful composite capitals of Parian marble, which are walled up in this wretched hole.

It was a strange perversity of taste, that could barbarously build up these noble columns of the ancient peristyle, and erect immediately in front of them that mean little portico which now stares us in the face with its ugliness and deformity! Even though emphatically assured that it was the work of *Saint* Adrian I., (one of those works, I suppose, for which he was canonized,) we were unanimously reviling his memory for the deed, and arguing on the propriety of levelling the whole hideous fabric of Santa Maria in Cosmedin with the ground, in order to bring to light these beautiful remains of antiquity; when an old priest, who was sitting in a corner, and who had profited by our conversation, which was carried on in Italian, on account of two Italians who were with us, was so shocked by its profaneness, that he actually cast his eyes up to heaven with an exclamation of horror, and putting on his cap in act to go, as if he expected the roof to fall down upon his head, could not be stopped by the information that we were "*Lutherani!*" which, for the sake of our Italian friends, we dealt out to him; but muttered, as he went down the stairs, "*Lutherani! si! è vann' tutti, giù. giù, giù*——"*

This hideous church, which St. Adrian built up, and which we wanted to pull down, has the reputation of being the place in which St. Augustin taught rhetoric before he went to Britain; whence it is called the *Scuola di Sant' Agostino*, and you are shown the very chair he sat in.

Ancient columns of various kinds and proportions, taken from unknown edifices, line the nave, which also contains two *ambones*, or marble pulpits, common in all the early churches, and an ugly black image of the Madonna, with a Greek inscription; the work of Greek art-

* "Ay, Lutherans truly! and they'll every one go down—down—down"—(to the lowest pit.)

ists of the barbarous ages,* and supposed to be the most ancient Madonna in Rome. It is related of this Madonna, that on a particular day, when she had been always accustomed to appear in public, the priests having neglected to open the closet in which she was kept, she became so angry at being left in the dark, that she burst open the doors for herself, in the middle of the mass ;—a miracle which is still commemorated as highly edifying.

In the portico of this church is a flat round slab of white marble, with holes in the centre for eyes, mouth, and nose, exactly resembling the common representations of the face of the sun. It is called "*La Bocca della Verita*," and gives this name to the whole piazza. Great was its fame as a touchstone of truth among the vulgar of Rome, who believed—but their faith seems now to be wavering—that whoever put his hand into its mouth, and took a false oath, would never more be able to withdraw it.

This veracious Bocca is supposed to have been the mouth of a common sink, and we fancied we could trace the marks worn upon it by the constant tread of feet.

The "*Ara Maxima*," the great altar,—sacred to Hercules for his victory over Cacus,—"consecrated," says Tacitus, "by Evander, the Arcadian, to Hercules, then a deity alive and on the earth,"—included by Romulus within the furrow drawn by his ploughshare,—and venerated from the earliest to the latest period of Roman story ; this famous Ara Maxima is supposed to have stood immediately behind the church of Santa Maria *in Cosmedin*, at the base of this angle of the Palatine.†

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* At that period the Greeks were for a long time the only painters, and supplied the whole of Christian Europe with images of saints and madonnas—to the manufacture of which, indeed, their art was chiefly confined. Thus, the term "Greek," when applied to painting, is an opprobrious epithet, while to sculpture it is the highest eulogium.

† The ancients seem to have had a remarkable superstition respecting Hercules, from which one might almost be inclined to deduce the origin of tithes, if their foundation was not known in the Mosaic law. The Carthaginians were in the habit of sending a vessel, loaded with one-

Sixtus IV. knocked down an old ruin here, supposed —but it was mere supposition—to have been the temple of Hercules. And near here was found the bronze, gilt, and probably very ancient statue of Hercules, now in the museum of the Capitol; but it could not have been that statue of Hercules which was worshipped in his temple in the Forum Boarium; for Macrobius tells us it was veiled, and this has its head uncovered.*

The neighbouring church of Santa Maria Egyzziaca has been formed out of another ancient temple, which I may, perhaps, be allowed to call by its ordinary name, that of *Fortuna Virilis*, since even conjecture has never hit upon another. Not that any body imagines it really to be that temple; for, on the contrary, it is well known that the temple of Fortuna Virilis stood in the Forum Boarium; and this, according to the antiquaries, is without its bounds. It consists of seven fluted Ionic columns, which have formed the side of the temple, and which are elevated upon a high *stylobata*, or basement of Tiburtine stone; half sunk in the wall that fills up the intercolumniations. The four columns of the portico, anciently the entrance of the temple, are now concealed by the end wall and entrance of the church. It is worthy of remark, that the volutes are angular in these columns, which is generally considered a modern innovation; and, as far as I know, this is the only instance of it in the ancient Ionic. The solidity and plainness of this structure have induced many to consider it a work of the Republic; in which they pay that age no great compliment; for Winkelman calls it, "*Il più peggio di tutti*," the worst of all ancient Roman buildings. If really Republican, however, it is the most ancient temple remaining at

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tenth of the produce of their land, every year, as an offering to the Tyrian Hercules; and it was by no means uncommon among the Romans, to dedicate a tenth of their possessions to that God, in the expectation of a return of a hundred fold. See Livy, lib. xvi. cap. 5.; and also his account of the Ara Maxima.

* Macrobius Saturnali, lib. iii. It may not perhaps be quite unnecessary to observe that a *veiled statue* has a light drapery over the top of the head, fastened under the chin, but that the face is wholly uncovered.

Rome. All the rest are unquestionably of the empire, and are of marble, which was never in use till the age of Augustus. That it alone is of stone, may therefore, perhaps, give some countenance to the belief of its higher antiquity.

We next proceeded to the temple of Antoninus and Faustina, situated in that wide and ruin-covered spot, that now bears the name of the Roman Forum, although this temple stands without its ancient limits—as I think I before observed—only I can believe you may have forgotten it. That it is the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina, the inscription on the frieze proves beyond all doubt; and it is the only temple in Rome, except the Pantheon, the identity of which is known with certainty, because the only one on which the inscription remains; but even with that inscription, in legible characters, staring one in the face, the ingenious heads of the antiquaries have found matter of dispute, in the question of which Antoninus it belonged to, whether Antoninus Pius, or Marcus Aurelius, both of them unluckily having had a Faustina to wife, and both, of course, having been deified. The arguments certainly seemed to me to preponderate on the side of Marcus Aurelius and his Faustina. But while the question was arguing, with great learning and length, I happened to cast my eyes from the beautiful sculptured frieze of this temple, and its majestic columns, to the pitiful Triumphal Arch of Septimius Severus: and the striking contrast of the beauty of the one with the meanness of the other filled me with amazement at the rapid degradation that must have taken place in the fine arts, during the twelve years only that elapsed between the death of Marcus Aurelius and the reign of Septimius Severus. Yet, not only this temple, but all the sculpture of the reign of the former emperor, is extremely fine,* while that of the age of Septimius Severus is uniformly execrable.

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* The Triumphal Column of Marcus Aurelius—the equestrian statue—the bass reliefs that adorned his Triumphal Arch, now on the staircase at the Palazzo de' Conservatori—and those, still finer, in the grand saloon of the Villa Albani—may be taken as fair specimens of the sculpture of his age;—and these are very little inferior to the best sculpture of the times of Trajan or Hadrian.

The Temple of Antoninus and Faustina is the latest fine specimen of architecture which remains to this day. Its noble portico, which, though entire, has evidently suffered from fire, is composed of six Corinthian columns of *Cipollino** marble in front, united to the cella of the temple, by two on each side in depth.

A considerable part of the solid wall of the cella of the temple, built of large square blocks of stone, fixed together without cement, is still remaining on one side. It has once been covered with slabs of marble, fastened to the walls with pegs of metal, the vestiges of which may be traced. The marble frieze of the portico, beautifully sculptured with griffins, sphinxes, candelabras, vases, &c. in fine preservation, which is continued along it, would seem to prove that the *Posticum* had been precisely similar in its portico, &c. to the front; but of course this cannot now be ascertained. A flight of twenty-one marble steps led up to the entrance of this temple. It is one of the long line of those which stood on the Via Sacra, between which, however, and their porticos, there must have been the area, which was in front of every temple, and in which the altar of sacrifice was always situated.

A little farther on, another of the ancient temples of the Via Sacra, supposed to be the double temple of Romulus and Remus, is transformed into the Church of the saints of Cosmo and Damiano, brothers and martyrs, who now hold it in partnership, and seem to have slipped into the business of Romulus and Remus, the original proprietors of the concern. It is an old established house,—the firm only is changed.

It does not present much to interest. The first building has been circular, the second square; but the cella of the temple is now half buried; and therefore the upper part of the ancient walls forms the lower part of the walls of the church; the pavement being continued nearly on a level with the present surface of the ground, which is far elevated above the ancient level, leaves one half of the

* A species of white marble, lightly clouded with green, which is found, like many other sorts, only among the ruins of Ancient Rome.

Temple below it. To this, now a subterranean chapel beneath the church, we were conducted by one of the lay brothers of the convent, after he had performed divers genuflexions before the high altar, and lighted a wax taper. The circular part is called the Temple of Remus; and the square part beyond it, the Temple of Romulus. Here was found the marble plan of Rome, which had formed the pavement of the Temple, and the broken fragments of which, without any attempt at arrangement, are now fixed in the staircase wall of the Museum of the Capitol.

Having gazed round at these dreary vaults, and seen nothing, I was for coming back content; but our conductor carried us "deeper and deeper still," to a dungeon below these dungeons—conjectured to have been the *Adytum* of the ancient Temple—containing an altar where mass is said to have been performed by the bishops, during the persecutions of the Christians; in which case, I think, they must inevitably have sustained martyrdom from the chilling damps, which made our teeth chatter in our head during the few moments we remained.

This church contains that celebrated Madonna who rebuked St. Gregory for his unpoliteness in not bowing to her, by calling out to him, "*Gregorie, quare me non salutasti?*"

At the door of this church, is an ancient Roman gate of bronze. Two old columns of *Cipollino* marble, half buried in the earth, at the door-way of an adjoining oratorio, for a wonder, are not even reputed to be any thing ancient, but are acknowledged to have been brought from some unknown Roman ruin in modern days, and sunk here.

The Temple of Peace, which, on pursuing the course of the Via Sacra, we next come to, is not allowed, by the antiquaries of the present day, to be a temple at all. They can neither make it out to be a *Hypæthros*, like the Pantheon; nor a circular *Peripteros*, like the little Temple of Vesta; nor a *Prostylos*, nor a *Amphi-Prostylos;* nor a *Dypteros*, nor a *Pseudo-dypteros;* nor any of Vitruvius's fourteen orders of temples, nor any de-

scription of temples whatsoever; nor can they find out any possibility of its ever having had any of the three necessary constituent parts of a temple—the cella, the portico, and the area—not to mention that it had windows, which they will by no means allow to any temples, except those of Vesta.

Certainly, its form, and the disposition of its parts, bear no resemblance to any known temple of antiquity. But how few are those of which the ruins or the description have come down to the present time! Nor did the ancients bind themselves so slavishly to these general rules, as modern critics pretend. A thousand aberrations from architectural laws might be instanced—and why should not the form of a temple be one?

Winkelman, who seems never to question the identity of this ruin with the Temple of Peace, gives it as one instance of Temples with three naves or aisles, and mentions Jupiter Capitolinus as another; adding, that such temples had always vaulted roofs.* The Temple of Jupiter Olympius had also† three aisles.

But even if it were a temple, the antiquaries will not allow that it could be Vespasian's Temple of Peace, because, they say, the style of architecture, and the clumsiness of the brick-work, prove it to have been an erection of a much later period; and because—which is a much more incontrovertible reason—the Temple of Peace was burnt down in the time of Commodus.‡ Yet it surely must have been subsequently rebuilt, because, long after his reign, it is spoken of as entire;§ nay, I was confidently assured that it actually was rebuilt by Septimius Severus. I am sorry I cannot remember the authority that was given me for this asser-

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* Winkelman, Observations sur l'Architecture des Anciens, chap. i. 372.

† Paus. lib. v. cap. 10. p. 199.

‡ Herodian, lib. i. Galen. lib. i. l. 1.

§ Trebellius Pollio, (life of Victorina) says, "Nemo in Templo Pacis dicturus est," &c. &c. I am indebted to Signore Nibby (Foro Romano, p. 196) for this quotation. That learned antiquary, himself, however, does not admit that the Temple of Peace was ever rebuilt, but supposes it stood in ruins from the days of Commodus to those of Justinian. Vide p. 196. Foro Romano.

tion, nor recover the antiquary that made it. But the scanty and mutilated annals of that period of history may sufficiently account for no record of its re-erection being extant. It would not, however, have been spoken of by a writer of the age of Constantine, if it had not been in existence.* It was ruined in the reign of Commodus, and Procopius† speaks of it as a ruin in his time; it therefore seems incredible that its broken and burnt-down walls should have been suffered to stand close by the residence of the Emperors, in the most crowded part of the capital, from the times of Commodus to those of Justinian, a period of nearly four centuries, when Rome was the focus of the wealth and splendour of the world. It is surely more probable that it had been rebuilt, and again destroyed, during the sacks, and sieges, and battles, and conflagrations, that preceded the Gothic war. At all events, the fact that it was a ruin in the days of Procopius, does not prove that it may not be a ruin in ours.

To my humble thinking, therefore, this ruin may possibly be the remains of the rebuilt temple of Peace; yet as it bears a strong resemblance to a Basilica, and as the Forum of Peace, like every other forum, must have had a Basilica, I thought this might be it, and plumed myself upon the notion. But when I communicated it to some learned antiquaries, they declared, that though the ruin bore every appearance of being the remains of a Basilica, it must, from the style of the architecture, be the Basilica—not of Vespasian, but of Constantine—who built, or rather dedicated, a magnificent Basilica, erected by Maxentius on the *Via Sacra;* and as this is on the Via Sacra, and looks like a Basilica, and a work of that age, they maintained that, *sicuramente*, it was the remains of Constantine's Basilica—and they may be right. But we are often sadly cramped for want of space in Rome; and if this be the Basilica of Constantine, where shall we find room on the Via Sacra for

* Trebellius Pollio, quoted above.
† Procop. De Bell. Got. lib. iv. cap. 21.

the Forum and Temple of Peace?* For the said Basilica we might perhaps find a situation, as it could not require so much space as a whole Forum; and, indeed, it has been conjectured, that this Basilica of Constantine may be the Basilica of St. John Lateran, which for many ages went under the name of the Basilica of Constantine, and was certainly a Basilica built by Constantine. But then it is not on the Via Sacra—and besides, the antiquaries won't hear of it.

Volumes might, and, indeed, have been written about these three clumsy brick vaults; but I wish to trouble you no farther with them, except to observe, that, at all events, this building cannot be *Vespasian's* Temple of Peace. The poverty of the architecture, in which immensity of size is called in as a substitute for grandeur of design—the irregularity of the arches, which are of different span—and the badness of the masonry, are perhaps more conclusive arguments than you may be aware of, that this structure is the work of a declining age, far posterior to that of Vespasian.† In the best state of the arts, the beauty and solidity of the mason-work is not less conspicuous than the perfection of the plan. The very bricks of the age of Augustus, Nero, and Titus, are easily distinguishable from those of a later period. Brick-work was then put together with very little cement, and stone walls without any.

The *opus reticulàtum*, or articulated style of building, which was far the most beautiful and durable of any, was in general use towards the close of the Republic, and during the Augustan age. After the reigns of the

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* The Forum of Peace must have been situated, as this ruin is, near the Temple of Venus and Rome, and near the Roman Forum.—Suetonius, Vespas. 9. says, "Fecit et nova opera, Templum Pacis Fora proximum." Ammian. Marcell. couples it with the Temple of Venus and Rome, "Urbis Templum, Forumque Pacis;"—viz. the double temple of Venus and Rome, usually called Templum Urbis, and sometimes Templum Veneris, by ancient writers, but seldom both. Vide Rufus Victor.

† The beautiful Corinthian column belonging to this building, now erected in front of the Church of Sta Maria Maggiore, the sole survivor of the eight which were here in the time of Poggius, may have formed a part of the original structure. Its style proves that it cannot have been the work of the age of Constantine, nor originally a part of his Basilica.

twelve Cæsars, it became more rare, but was employed by Hadrian in almost all his splendid edifices. After his death it was scarcely ever used, and certainly never after the time of Caracalla.

It was formed of stone, cut into small regular squares, and built in diamond fashion, exhibiting the appearance of net-work, from which it derived its name. It was always made of the common stone of the country. At Rome, we invariably find it of tufo; at Tivoli, of travertine.

So solid was the structure, that it must have been a work of greater labour to have destroyed reticulated walls, than to have erected them.*

As a proof of the superiority of the masonry, as well as the architecture of the early period of the Empire, the most ancient walls which now remain are the best preserved. The brick walls of the Palace of the Cæsars, and the Baths of Titus, look as fresh as if they had been built yesterday; and we can scarcely believe that they have stood nearly eighteen centuries. In these buildings, in the Temple of Venus beside the Circus of Sallust, and in almost every ruin of similar date, the brick walls are strengthened and supported by blind arches, which at first sight have the appearance of arches, built up—but are decisive proofs of the best age of Roman architecture. The buildings of that period seem intended for incalculable duration; and if violence had not destroyed what was secure against the attacks of time, they would have been the admiration of the pre-

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* Vitruvius objects to this style of building its want of durability, but experience has disproved his censure. "*Sarà difficile,*" which in Italian always means impossible,—"*Sarà difficile,*" said an old cardinal whom I met the other day in his afternoon walk on the Trinità de Montà,—shaking his head at the broken reticulated walls of the Roman villas, which recent levellings to form a promenade have brought to light, and which he was lamenting the impossibility of removing; because without these "*murà antiche,*" he observed, "the *veduta,*" would be "*bellissima;*" "*ma più antica più forte,*" he added as he walked on, his attendant priests obsequiously echoing back his observations, and following his lead in conversation, as closely as the old coach and black horses, with the red trappings, did his steps.

sent, and of many a future age. But man has always been the destroyer of the works of man.

In an excavation, made in 1812, beneath the ruins denominated the Temple of Peace, some remains of Roman houses were found, adorned with paintings, supposed to be of the age of Septimius Severus. I do not lay much stress upon this fact, which would at once prove this building to be of subsequent date, and consequently not Vespasian's Temple of Peace, because I do not see how it could be so exactly ascertained that the paintings were the work of Severus's reign.

In a former excavation,* in the court of the *Mendicanti*, behind the Temple of Peace, was discovered the workshop of a Roman sculptor, chiefly filled with the busts and statues of the emperors and their families, many of which were unfinished. The place is filled up, and the sculpture conveyed to different museums; but it must have been a sight almost similar in interest to the shops of Pompeii.

The Temple of Peace, which far exceeded every other both in magnitude and magnificence, it is well known, was decorated with the spoils of the Temple of Jerusalem, and indeed built to receive them. But by a curious destiny, it would seem that these spoils reverted back to the very spot from which they had been taken. Genseric, at his sack of Rome, carried them to Africa; Belisarius won them from him, and used them to grace his triumphal entrance into Constantinople; and finally Justinian sent them to various Christian churches in Jerusalem.† It is a very curious circumstance that these were almost the only treasures of the Temple of Peace which were saved from the flames.‡ The invaluable library which was attached to it, is supposed to have been burnt with the building; and the paintings—the works of the most celebrated masters—which adorned its upper galleries, probably shared the same fate.

The famous statue of the Nile, described by Pliny,

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* Made in 1780.
† Vide Nardini, Roma Antica, l. iii. cap. 12.
‡ Procopius, lib. ii. cap. 10.

with the sixteen little Loves upon it emblematical of the sixteen cubits its waters rise during the annual inundation, also stood here. There is a very fine ancient copy of it in marble, in the statuary magazine of the Vatican. The original was of black basalt.

The remains of the double temple near the Colosseum answer so accurately in situation and plan to that pointed out by historians, and given by the medal, of Hadrian's magnificent Temple of Venus and Rome, that the most skeptical seem to be convinced of their identity.

Every thing that Hadrian did was splendid, and this was one of the most splendid of his works, and planned by himself. It stood on the *Via Sacra*, (which encircled it on two sides,) facing, in opposite directions, the Colosseum and Rome.

The peristyles of this double peripteral temple had twelve columns in front, and twenty-two in depth, of Parian marble, some broken remains of which we observed among the ruins. The whole was surrounded at a considerable distance with a double colonnade, five hundred feet in length, and three hundred in breadth, formed of columns of Oriental granite, with bases and capitals of Parian marble, the gigantic shafts of which, broken and scattered, are strewed around, and lie in numbers near Titus's arch. We can still trace the platform where this magnificent column stood, and the situation, and even the steps, which led to the temple.

The beauty of the roof we may yet admire, and Fancy may replace the shattered column and the fallen capital,—but can these eloquent mementos of taste and magnificence reflect a lustre on the memory of Hadrian, when we reflect that his inhuman vengeance doomed to death the unfortunate artist that presumed to criticise the plan of this temple, and arraigned the perfection of a work of a tyrant?

Better would it have been for Apollodorus, had he, following the example of a more prudent Roman slave, been wise enough "not to have had more *taste* than one who had millions at his bidding."

The patronage of Hadrian to arts and letters has rendered his memory dear, undeservedly dear, to men of

taste and genius in every age; and there are some, whom even historical testimony* cannot convince, that the great, the enlightened Hadrian, could be capable of a deed of such monstrous atrocity; yet we may easily believe, that he, who, with perfidious ingratitude, could deliberately poison the virtuous wife to whom he owed the very power he abused, would not scruple to sacrifice such a victim to his offended vanity.

The ancient bronze of this double temple was carried off by Pope Honorius I. to adorn the old Church of St. Peter's.

In a lonely vineyard on the Esquiline Hill, stands the picturesque ruin called the Temple of Minerva Medica. Its form, though circular without, is decagonal within. It is built of brick, and is now stripped of every ornament. But the yawning chasms in its vaulted roof, the wild weeds that wave over it, the fallen masses that choke it up, the total destruction that threatens, and the solitude that surrounds it, give it an interest and a charm it probably never could have owned in a state of perfect preservation.

In the days when it was the fashion to call every ruin a temple, this was called a temple; when baths came into vogue, this was called a bath; and now that basilicas are all the rage, it is called a basilica. Its name, however, does, and will continue to be the Temple of Minerva Medica—which specific appellation it received, because, among many other statues, a statue of Minerva, with a serpent at her feet,† was discovered here. Even the identity of the goddess has been called in question. "I don't believe that statue to be Minerva Medica," said a celebrated antiquary to me one day when we were looking at the plaster cast at the bottom of the staircase of the Palazzo Luciano, "I don't believe it. The serpent might have many mystical meanings, and I think I have found out the true one. It alludes to the transformation of Erycthonius into a serpent."

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* Dion mentions the fact.

† Not twisted about her legs, as Forsyth describes.

Now, I always understood that the Athenian king had serpents' tails instead of legs, but never that he was changed into the entire reptile. But this my learned friend would by no means allow, and I had no desire to contest the point.

The statue in question passed from the ruined house of Giustiniani to the rising family of the Buonapartes; but it has been transferred from Prince Lucien to the Pope, and is now in the Magazine of the Vatican, where the sculpture, for which there is no room, awaits the building of a new gallery.

There is a fountain of modern date, made by the peasants to water their vineyards and their asses; besides which, the lower part of the ruin is continually wet with a copious natural spring. Searching in the centre of it, among the long grass and weeds which grow luxuriantly in the watered ground, we found a carved sort of basin, about nine inches above the ground; and on further investigation, discovered the marble rams' heads through which the water had flowed out of this reservoir.

For what purpose this basin may have served, I shall not pretend to say. I would not upon any account insinuate that it was a bath, because the antiquaries say that it was impossible; but perhaps this circumstance, joined to its curved and circular form, and the aggregate number of statues found here,—which were favourite ornaments of baths,—might tend to impress vulgar minds with the notion; not that it was ever supposed to have formed a part of any of the grand Thermæ of Rome, but of some smaller and less sumptuous baths, whose waters were probably considered peculiarly salubrious and medicinal, as they were under the special protection of Minerva Medica,—if Minerva Medica she be.

It is by some writers supposed to have been a bath, or other edifice, belonging to the villa of Caius and Lucius, which was in this vicinity; but the style of building is not good enough for the Augustan age. Nardini's conjecture is, in my opinion, by far the most rational—that this building (whether a bath or no bath) formed a part of the Palace of Licinius, which unques-

tionably stood here,* for Santa Bibiana was martyred in it, and her church, built upon the very spot of her martyrdom, stands hard by this ruin. It is evident, too, that it has been connected with other buildings, for remains of walls diverging on either side of it are still visible. The style of the architecture, and the comparative coarseness of the brick-work, betray the declining period of the art. The form of the arch is of that date. The best judges pronounce it certainly not to be earlier than the age of Diocletian, so that every circumstance tends to corroborate the supposition, that even if it were a bath, it belonged to the Palace of the last Pagan Emperor.

The ruin in the vineyard adjoining Santa Croce in Gierusalemme on this hill, which was demolished in order to build up that church, is called the Temple of Venus and Cupid; not that it bears the least resemblance to a temple, but merely because a group of Venus and Cupid, now in the Vatican, was found here. As this group, however, has proved to be the statue of Sallustia, the wife of Alexander Severus, with her son, under the figure of those deities, the circumstance of finding it in this building alone forms a sufficient presumption, that it was *not* that temple, since surely no mortal woman would presume to place her own image as Venus, in the very sanctuary of the goddess.

In truth, a few broken brick walls are all that remain of it; but the antiquaries, who can no longer find in it a temple, now see the form of a tribune, discern the windows, and trace the plan of a basilica; and as the Tribunal *Sessorium*, established by Claudius, was "somewhere hereabouts," they suppose these walls to be its vestiges.

The remains of the Temple of *Venus Erycina*, consisting only of the octagonal brick cella, still stand in the circus and gardens of Sallust. Our doubts as to its identity are nearly removed, for not only the statue of

* Vide Anastasius, and Nardini's Roma Antica.

the goddess, but a very decisive inscription* was found here; and the situation of this ruin, (beyond the ancient Porta Collina, though within the present extended walls of the city,) exactly corresponds with that pointed out by Livy† and Ovid‡ for the Temple of Venus Erycina, to which the Roman women annually went in solemn procession, bearing their gifts, and offering their supplications. Could this be *that* Temple of Venus, where Cæsar instituted a cabinet of Natural History?

We are told that it was before the temple of Venus *Genetrix*, that he erected the statue of his famous horse which had feet with toes.§ It was before the same temple that he was seated, when the whole body of the Senate came to bring him decrees of honour and power, and he would not even condescend to rise up to receive them.‖

The cella of this temple has been as usual dark, light having only been admitted by the door. The brick work is evidently that of an undegenerated age, and, therefore, we may conclude it to be of the early period of the empire.

In exploring it, we found some little secret passages and hidden recesses in the walls, running behind the great niche in which stood the image of the goddess, and apparently intended to communicate with other chambers and buildings, which wonderfully excited our curiosity; but we could not settle for what mysterious pur-

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* It is as follows:

M. AVRELIVS. PACORVS
ET. M. COCCEIVS. STRATOCLES. AEDITVI
VENERIS. HORTORVM. SALVSTIANORVM
BASEM. CVM. PAVIMENTO. MARMORATA
DEANAE. D. D.

† Livy records its situation and dedication, lib. xl. cap. 24. Another temple to Venus Erycina had previously been erected, in the second Punic war, in the Capitol, lib. xxiii. cap. 24.

‡ In Fast. iii. § Suet. Cæs. 61.

‖ Suet. Cæs. 78. It is well known that Julius Cæsar proclaimed himself to be descended from Venus, (see his oration on the death of his aunt Julia, in Suetonius,) thereby, perhaps, artfully suggesting to the minds of the Romans, his affinity to their great Trojan founder, Æneas. In the same manner Augustus pretended that he was the son of Apollo, and that the God had assumed the form of a serpent, for the purpose of giving him birth. Vide Suet. Augustus.

pose they had been designed, and none of the antiquaries whom we have consulted, could give us the smallest light upon it.

I have now mentioned all, and more than all the ruins of the Temples, or reputed Temples of Rome, which are worth notice. Many of them, which consist merely of decaying brick walls, I am far from thinking deserving of an express visit, or a particular description. You will see them in your excursions to other objects; but, to avoid confusion, I thought it best to run at once through the few shattered ruins that constitute the sole remains of the magnificent temples of Ancient Rome.

LETTER XXIV.

ANCIENT TEMPLES—TEMPLE OF PIETY—ROMAN DAUGHTER—TEMPLE OF JANUS—TEMPLE OF BELLONA—TEMPLE OF MARS—ORACLES—PAGAN PRIEST—RITES, &c.

I THOUGHT I had done with temples, but there is one, though only a name, that I cannot pass over wholly unnoticed. It is the Temple of Piety, erected by command of the Roman Senate, in honour of the daughter who saved the life of her father when condemned to perish of hunger, by nursing him from her bosom.

It was in the prisons of the Decemviri, in the ancient *Forum Olitorium*, that this beautiful and affecting trait of filial piety happened. The prison was destroyed; the commemorative Temple sacred to Filial Piety was erected upon its site; and upon the ruins of that temple the Church of S. Nicola in Carcere is said to be built. In that church, you are made to look down, through an aperture in the pavement, at one end of it, into a dungeon in which you indistinctly descry, by the light of torches, three different columns, in three different places, which, you are told, are remains of three different temples, that all stood on this spot (in the breadth of the church.) Two of these columns are Ionic, and one Doric; all are of stone. Of course they show you which column was

the Temple of Piety; but if you ask how they knew it, they will marvel much at your inquisitiveness.

I could have wished to have lent myself to the delusion; to have believed that I stood upon the spot, and saw the vestiges of the building consecrated to Filial Piety; but it would not do. Pliny,* who relates the story, also mentions, that the temple was destroyed to make way for the Theatre of Marcellus; therefore, it is impossible that any trace can now remain of what was removed before his time.

According to Pliny's narration, it was an aged woman, whose life was sustained by the piety of her chil; and thus the maternal bosom, which had reared her in her infancy, drew its nourishment from hers in the close of life. The daughter was the nurse of the mother.

Yet both in popular tradition and in painting, the *Carità Romana* is always represented to have been a father nursed by his child; but probably she has been confounded by common fame with the Grecian Daughter, who by a similar act saved her father's life.

In the *Forum Olitorium*, besides this Temple of Piety, the Temple of Hope, of Juno Sospita,† and a great many more, there was a temple to Janus, originally built by Caius Duillius, the first Roman who ever obtained a naval triumph, and rebuilt by Tiberius.‡ This must not be confounded with the ancient Temple of Janus, built by Numa forty years after the foundation of the city, at the extremity of the street called Argiletus,§ the doors of which were always open in war and shut in peace.‖

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* Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. vii. cap. 36.

† Livy, Dec. iii. lib. xxxiv. cap. 52. ‡ Tacitus, Ann. lib. ii. cap. 41.

§ *Ad infimum Argiletum.* Livy, lib. i. cap. 8.—Servius also (Æn. lib. vii. ver. 607) states that Numa's Temple of Janus was at the end of the Argiletus, *and near the Theatre of Marcellus*, and that it was considered as two temples, from both faces of Janus being worshipped.—Ovid says (Fasti, lib. i. ver. 263, 264,) "Templa Jani *juncta* foris." It is obvious, then, that the ancient Temple of Janus was not in, but near to the Forum. Yet Mr. Nibby affirms (Foro Romano, p. 170,) in defiance of Livy, Tacitus, Ovid, and Servius, who distinctly prove the existence of two Temples of Janus, neither of which were in the Roman Forum, that a little bronze edicola, large enough to contain the double-faced statue of Janus, which in the time of Procopius stood in the Roman Forum, and which is never mentioned till the sixth century of the Christian era, was the Temple built by Numa, and the only Temple of Janus in Rome!

‖ Livy, lib. i. cap. 19. It is probable that the gates of every Temple of

But to go through the long catalogue of vanished temples that once adorned Rome,* would indeed be an endless and unprofitable task. There are perhaps a few so memorable for their fame in history, that their very sites are worth pointing out, although not a stone of them remains. Of these the most remarkable is the Temple of Bellona, in the Circus Flaminius, which stood anciently without the Flaminian gate, although its site is now covered with the most populous part of modern Rome. Here the Senate convened to meet the victorious consuls who demanded the honour of a triumph, and decide upon their claims. Here foreign ambassadors were received from states at war with the Romans ;† and from the *Columna Bellica* in front of this temple, the consul threw the arrow of war towards that country against which hostilities were proclaimed.‡

The priests of Bellona, like the modern frantic Dervishes of the East, threw themselves into all sorts of contortions, cutting themselves with knives, howling, foaming at the mouth, and falling into fits of frenzy. They were called *Fanatici ;*§ and the broken words they uttered in their transports passed for oracles of the Goddess.

Talking of oracles, which we were doing not long ago with one of the most celebrated Roman antiquaries of the day, I was surprised to find, that he treated with

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Janus were shut in peace ; but when that rare event occurred, it is of the ancient Temple of Janus alone that the Roman historians speak. Suet. Aug. 22. "*Templum Jani ter clausit.*" Livy, lib. i. cap. 8.

* Their number, however, seems to have been somewhat exaggerated ; for Pavinius, in his minute catalogue of the buildings in Rome, enumerates only 171 Temples and Ædes. The only difference between the two was, that a *Templum* was not only, like the Ædes, dedicated to some God, but was also consecrated by the Augurs. The Ædes, including the Ædiculæ, Sacella, &c. were unconsecrated.

† A Temple of Apollo without the city was also occasionally used for this purpose.

‡ Ovid. Fast. 6.

§ The priests of Baal seem to have resembled these ancient and modern fanatics of the Western and Eastern world,—the priests of Bellona, and the Dervishes ; for we are told in the Bible, "they leaped upon the altar and cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them." It is curious to remark the same tricks and cheats, in countries, ages, and religions, so widely different.

most unmeasured scorn the belief that there ever were any oracles at Rome or the neighbourhood, or indeed in any part of Italy ; and asserted, that they were exclusively confined to Greece. I should never have doubted his doctrine had I not happened to remember that Suetonius (which I had just been reading) mentions the circumstance of Domitian's consulting the Oracle of Fortune at Præneste ; and that the same author relates, that Tiberius attempted to suppress all the oracles in the neighbourhood of the city, but was terrified from his purpose by the manifestations of divine displeasure in the Oracles of Præneste. I might have remembered, too, that the Vatican was the seat of an oracle,* and that in many of the poets there are a thousand other proofs of oracles besides ; but these are sufficient, and abundantly prove that my friend the antiquary was no great oracle himself.

As the Temple of Bellona stood without the northern gate (the *Porta Flaminia*,) that of Mars was without the southern gate of the city (the *Porta Capena*.)† Thus Rome, on either approach, was guarded by the masculine or feminine deity of war ; and the ambassador of the state which might meditate, or the enemy which might advance to commit hostilities, was taught to dread the vengeance of the martial gods, and the martial people they protected.

A procession of the Roman Knights on horseback annually took place, from this Temple to the Capitol, on the 15th of July, in honour of Castor and Pollux, who fought for the Romans on that day at the battle of Lake Regillus.

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* Gell. xvi. 17.

† There is a tradition, that the little Church of *Domine quo Vadis*, somctimes called *Santa Maria delle Palme*, stands on the site of the Temple of Mars (*extra muros*,) and received that name from a grove of palm-trees, which are supposed to have surrounded it. But it was in memory of the Christian, not the Pagan palms, that the church received its title. An inscription found in the *Vigna Nari* (and reported by Venuti,) is supposed to prove that the Temple of Mars stood there, because that Temple is thought to have been exactly a mile from the ancient Porta Capena (which was between the little Churches of S. Neroe and S. Cesareo,) and because the ancient mile-stone on the Via Appia marked No. 1, now on the balustrade of the Piazza of the Capitol, was found in the same vineyard. I should have looked for that temple nearer to Rome.

The priests of Mars were scarcely more tranquil than those of Bellona. They were named *Salii*, from their dancing or leaping: and on the 1st of March used to go through the streets of Rome in a sort of Pyrrhic dance, bearing the *Ancilia*, or twelve sacred shields, one of which belonged to the god, and fell from heaven,* and the rest were made in imitation of it, lest so invaluable a treasure should be stolen.

The rites of religion among the ancients, it must be owned, were sufficiently obstreperous; whether we look to these already named, to the licentious orgies of Bacchus, the wild feasts of the *Lupercalia*, or the horrible din with which, at the festivals of Cybele, the *Corybantes* renewed and commemorated that sacred uproar that saved the infant Jupiter from being devoured by his father;† we shall find that noise constituted their essence.

It would be well if this were all. Paganism has been called a mild and cheerful, if not a pure and moral faith; yet were its rites stained with blood, and not the blood of brutes only, but of men. To Mania, the mother of the Lares,‡ boys were annually offered up; and though this horrible right was abolished by Junius Brutus, it would appear that human victims were habitually sacrificed, even at a far later period,§ as we have already seen they occasionally were.‖

Christianity is the only religion (for Mahometism is but a plagiarism from it) that is, or ever has been, free from this foul stain, and that does not enforce the crime of murder as a religious duty; a proof in itself sufficient of its

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* Plutarch's Life of Numa Pompilius.

† I need hardly observe, that, like most of the Pagan fictions, this is allegorical; that Saturn devouring his children only typifies time swallowing up years.

‡ The Lares and the Penates are often confounded together as the same household gods, though essentially different. The latter were of divine, the former of human origin. The latter were worshipped in the most retired and innermost parts of the house; the former, which were the spirits of their ancestors, were set out in public view, and guarded the domestic hearth.

There were public Penates and public Lares, to which little Temples, or *Edicolæ*, were erected by the waysides, and worshipped by the passing traveller.

§ Macrobius, Sat. i. 7. ‖ Vide Letter xxi.

divine origin, and not less strong, than that it is the only religion that announces one God.

It may afford a useful lesson to the proud presumption of human reason, to see man, whether left to the untutored dictates of his own mind, or enlightened by the most refined philosophy, alike seeking to win the favour of the gods or avert their vengeance, by spilling the blood of his fellow-creatures. When we behold religious murders extending through times and nations the most remote,—from the philosophic Romans, the luxurious Carthaginians, the British Druids, and the Eastern idolaters, to the timid Hindoos, the savage American Indians, the Brutal Africans, and the social South Sea Islanders,—we may indeed bless that divine faith, which not only opened to men the gates of heaven, but would, if its divine precepts were followed, make a heaven of earth.

Human sacrifices to the gods were not of long continuance, nor of frequent occurrence at Rome; but even during her brightest days, they were incessantly offered up to men. I need not resort to the bloody annals of empire; the carnage of Marius and of Sylla, and even of the hypocritically humane Augustus, are dreadful and incontestable proofs, that while one or two victims were thought adequate to propitiate the wrath of offended deities, thousands were insufficient to appease the hatred and revenge of man.*

Even the sacred fanes of religion, and the holy altars of the gods, were the scene, and sometimes the pretext, of the wrath and cruelty of man. It was in the Temple of Bellona that Sylla assembled the Senate, and coolly harangued them, while the dying cries of six thousand of his unfortunate victims, slaughtered by his command in the adjoining Circus Flaminius, rang in their ears. As if this were not sufficient to glut his vengeance, this monster massacred twelve thousand more at Prænestе.† Augustus caused three hundred, or, according to other accounts,

* Virgil notices the slaughter of the captives of war at the funeral pile of Pallas, as a matter of course. Æn. lib. xi. ver. 81.

† Plutarch—Life of Sylla.

four hundred* Roman Senators and Knights to be slain before the altar of Julius Cæsar, on the ides of March. Yet even the atrocious massacre of this multitude of brave men, whose only crime was that of having borne arms in the cause of their country's freedom, did not stain his memory with more infamy than the treacherous and inhuman murder of one—the best and greatest of the Romans—the glory of that, and the light of every succeeding age—the source of his own power, the dupe of his false professions, and the victim of his base ingratitude.

I know not how the memory of that man has escaped execration, who murdered Cicero to propitiate Antony.†

LETTER XXV.

THE CIRCUS, AND THE CIRCUS GAMES.

The most ancient, and indeed the only sports that were legalized in Rome during the period of the republic, were the Circus Games, which are by some supposed to be of Etruscan,‡ by others of Greek origin. But the Greeks

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* Suetonius—Life of Augustus, 15, Dion.

† The crimes of Augustus seem to be forgotten by posterity. Suetonius relates (27,) that "when the two other Triumvirs implored him to show mercy to the proscribed, he sternly declared no pardon should be given. Seeing a knight subscribe a paper in his presence, he suspected him of evil designs, and ordered him to be stabbed before his eyes. He conceived a similar suspicion against Gallius, a Prætor, who came to wait upon him, and commanded him to be put to the torture; and when the unfortunate man still continued to assert his innocence, he plucked out his eyes with his own hands, and then caused him to be killed. (15) He murdered many of his prisoners taken in battle in cold blood. (13) He ordered a father and son, taken prisoners at Philippi, to draw lots which should die, or else fight till one was slain. The father offered his life to save his son; Augustus ordered him to be murdered,—and at the same moment the son killed himself. He sent the head of Brutus from Philippi to be thrown at the base of Cæsar's statue." With what title ought the character of that man to be stamped, against whom history records such deeds as these?

‡ Horse races, according to Livy, were introduced from Thurium, a part of Lucania. Livy, lib. i. cap. 35.

had no Circuses. The *Hippodromus*, in which their chariot races were run at the Olympic Games, differed from the Circus both in form and plan,* and approached more to the nature of a race-course. The *Stadium*,† which was used for foot races, wrestling, and other athletic sports, was never the scene of chariot races, had no *spina*, and was oval at both ends, whereas the Circus of the Romans was divided longitudinally by the spina, and was square at the end from which the cars started, and oval at the other.

Though Romulus gave the games in honour of Neptune, which the Sabines attended, on the site of what was afterwards the Circus Maximus, the building itself was not erected till the reign of Tarquinius Priscus. During the progress of the republic, it was rebuilt, and frequently enlarged, and always merited its name, for it always continued to be the greatest.

In the time of Julius Cæsar, it was capable of containing 150,000 spectators ;‡ in the time of Trajan (according to Pliny,) it held 250,000 ; and after it was enlarged by Constantine the Great, it is reported, by Valentinian, to have been filled by 360,000.§

During the reigns of the kings, the Circus Maximus was the only Circus in Rome; but in republican times there were several.

The *Circus Flaminius* was built, A. U. 533, by C. Flaminius, when Censor;‖ the same who afterwards fell in the disastrous battle of Thrasymenus. It stood in the Campus Martius, and without the ancient Flaminian Gate. Not a vestige of it remains; but its site is marked by the Palazzo Mattei, and the surrounding streets.

Plays and dramatic entertainments were represented in this Circus,¶ on the dedication of the Temples of Juno

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* Vide the description in Pausanias, book vi. cap. 20—24.

† Pausanias, book i. cap. 19.

‡ Dionysius Halicarnassus.

§ It seems to have been enlarged by adding additional rows of seats in its height or depth, so that the figure was not changed.

‖ Livy. *Contents* of lib. xx. The Via Flaminia is also there recorded to have been made by C. Flaminius.

¶ Livy, lib. xl. cap. 51.

and Diana, an amusement for which such a building seems to be but ill calculated.

It is said, that in the court of the Convent of San Nicola Cesarini, are still some remains of a small temple, one of the many which stood in this Circus; but the monks, of course, will not admit females, so that I have never seen it; and, by all accounts, the loss is not very great.

The site of the *Circus Agonalis* is now believed to be occupied by the Piazza Navona, which still preserves its ancient form. The Agonal Games, in honour of Janus, which were annually celebrated here, in January and May, were unquestionably of high antiquity, and are even said to have been instituted by Numa Pompilius. The date of the erection of this Circus is obscure, but it must have been ancient, for we find it mentioned by Livy* at an early period of the republic.

The Circus of Flora was situated between the Esquiline and Viminal Hills; and it has been said upon supposition, to have stood where the Piazza Barbarini now is; but its exact site is unknown.

Flora was a favourite goddess among the Romans, and all the people of Etruscan origin; but she was completely slighted by the Greeks, unless we suppose her to be identical with their Chloris.

The *Floralia*, or Games of Flora, were exhibited every spring, originally on the last days of April, and afterwards on the 1st of May. The festival, still observed on that day among the common people of Rome, in the fields and turfy banks, "pranked with early flowers," in the neighbourhood of the city, and particularly at the Grotto of the Nymph Egeria; as well as the English custom of dancing round the May-pole, and even the sports practised later in the month, at the Christian feast of Whitsuntide, all seem to be vestiges of the games of Flora. The licentiousness of those amusements, indeed, are now abolished. Maidens still run races for ribands

* Livy, lib. xxx. cap. 38, mentions that the Circus Agonalis was inundated by the Tiber.

or smocks ; but naked females no longer run courses before assembled thousands, as in the *virtuous* days of the Roman republic.

We learn, indeed, that these, and many other of the gross and infamous exhibitions practised at these games, were suppressed, from respect to the virtue of Cato, who was once present at them,* and it is said they were never afterwards revived. Rope-dancing was also a common amusement ; and it appears that one species of it was introduced at these shows, of which we have no remains—that of elephants dancing on ropes.†

The Circus of Sallust was built in the age of Augustus. The Circus of Nero (begun by Caligula, and finished by Nero) was built on the ground now occupied by the Sacristy and Church of St. Peter. It was originally intended as a private theatre, where Nero might amuse himself in running chariot races with his favourites ; but he soon invited the populace to witness his dexterity, and became a common competitor for the prizes.‡ After the conflagration of Rome, he found a new amusement in torturing the Christians to death in this Circus, and in the gardens which surrounded it, under the pretence that they were the incendiaries—"nailing them alive to crosses, exposing them to be devoured by furious dogs, or wrapped in combustible garments, and set on fire like torches, to illuminate the night."

The Circus of Hadrian was behind this Mausoleum, and the Circus of Heliogabalus was near the Church of Santa Croce in Gierusalemme.§

But all these remain only in name. Not one stone stands upon another. Paul III., that universal destroyer of antiquities, removed the last remains of the Circus Maximus, a building which had stood through the Regal. the Republican, the Imperial, and the Gothic governments of Rome, and was finally demolished only in the Papal. Notwithstanding its destruction, however, the

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* Sen. Ep. 97.

† It was "a new kind of spectacle," brought into fashion by Galba. Suet. Galba.

‡ Tacitus, Ann. 14.

§ Tacitus, Ann. lib. xv. cap. 44.

form and parts of the Circus Maximus (as well as of every other ancient Circus) are so accurately preserved in bass reliefs, medals, &c., and so fully verified by the nearly perfect remains of one upon the Via Appia, that I had no hesitation in having a complete plan of it drawn by one of the Roman antiquaries, which, with the exception of the *Euripus*, or Canal, may serve as a tolerably correct representation of every ancient Circus, since they differed only in magnitude, not in plan.

As the Games of the Circus were sacred to the gods, altars and temples of various deities were erected in and around every Circus; and mention of a remarkable number of these in the Circus Maximus is incidentally made by the Roman historians.

A temple was erected here to Venus, by the fines imposed on the Roman ladies who were convicted of adultery;* and certainly the source of the fund for building it, gives one no very exalted idea of the virtue of the Roman matrons—even in the republican times; any more than the law found necessary in the first era of the Empire, "that no wife or daughter of a Roman Knight should prostitute herself for money!"† Besides this temple of Venus, there was a temple to Bacchus, Ceres, and Proserpine,‡ another to Flora,§ another to Hercules, and several others, all of which stood near the Circus Maximus, together with the colossal statue of Apollo, brought from Carthage.‖ The *Sacellum* of the Sun, the Altar of Youth, and the images, altars, and *Sacella* of a variety of deities, were erected on the *Spina* or long narrow ridge round which the cars ran, and which divided the arena of the Circus in its breadth into two parts. It was crowned with two Egyptian Obelisks, the first of which was placed there by Augustus, the last by Constans II.

At one of the two *Metæ*, which stood isolated at the extremities of the Spina, was the buried altar of Con-

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* Livy, lib. x. cap. 31.
† Tacitus, Ann. lib. ii. cap. 85.
‡ Tacitus, Ann. lib. ii. cap. 49.
§ Tac. lib. ii. cap. 49. Livy, lib. xxxvi. cap. 36.
‖ Plutarch's Life of Romulus.

sus ; a deity, who, according to some accounts, was the equestrian Neptune, in whose honour the games were given ; and to others, the God of Counsels, or Secrecy, who inspired Romulus with the project of carrying off the Sabine women at their first celebration, and whose altars stood in a dark spot, covered up with earth, and was only uncovered when the preparatory sacrifices were to be offered, in token that counsels should be secret and hidden. This altar was in every Circus. At the other *Meta*, in the Circus Maximus, stood the Altar of *Murcia*, the Goddess of Idleness and Sloth, generally supposed to be identical with Venus, that great patroness of idleness : and probably this altar gave to the valley the name of *Val Murcia*, or *Myrtia*, which it bears to this day, although other accounts say that it derived it from a myrtle tree sacred to Venus. The site and environs of the Circus Maximus are still called *Circhi* by the people of Rome.

If it was the first place where games were celebrated in Rome, it was also the last. So late as the close of the fifth century it was filled, for the last time, with Christian spectators,* who seem slowly and reluctantly to have abandoned these darling pleasures, the inhumanity of which was condemned by the spirit of their faith.

It is a mistake to suppose that the sports of the Circus were confined to chariot races. Horse and foot races, fights of gladiators,† wrestling, boxing (with the cæstus,) leaping, and all sorts of active exercises, were exhibited here. Naval courses and games were celebrated in the close of the republic, in the *Euripus*, a canal sixteen feet in breadth, with which Julius Cæsar surrounded the Circus Maximus ; and thirty-six crocodiles were shown by Augustus to the eyes of the wondering Romans, after his

* About the year 495, immediately after which the Circus Games were finally abolished. Baronius Annal. Ecclesias. (an authority I have never had an opportunity of consulting) is quoted in verification of the fact.

† Combats of gladiators were first exhibited in Rome A. U. 490.—(Vide Val. Max. ii. 4. 7.) They were then, and continued to be long afterwards, exhibited as funeral games only, perhaps to appease the manes of the dead, instead of the original horrible rite of sacrificing human beings. —Virg. Æn. x. 518. and xi. 81, 82.

triumphant return from Egypt.* Combats of wild beasts were held in the Circus Maximus before the beginning and before the end of the Empire ; in the days of Julius Cæsar† and Carinus.‡

This last prodigal and luxurious Emperor surpassed, in the pomp and splendour of the games and spectacles he exhibited, all who had gone before him. The care of his predecessor, Probus, had transformed the Circus into an artificial forest, filled with large trees transplanted by the roots ; and its shades were successively tenanted by hundreds of the white plumed ostrich, the stag, the elk, the zebra, the cameleopard, and the majestic elephant ; together with the hitherto-unseen forms of the bulky rhinoceros, and the hippopotamus of the Nile. The roar of Indian tigers and African hyenas resounded through the glade ; the spotted leopard roamed at large ; and hundreds of Numidian lions, transported from their burning deserts, and bears brought from their polar snows, were assembled and slaughtered§ in this ample arena.

In the long intervening period of the Empire that had elapsed between Cæsar and Carinus, the combats of gladiators and wild beasts had generally been given in the amphitheatre ;‖ and chariot races, the proper Circus games, alone exhibited here.

These sacred games, in honour of the gods, were annually given in the month of August,¶ under the direction, and generally at the expense, of the Ædiles, who frequently ruined themselves with the magnificence of these shows. Cæsar was obliged to sell his Tiburtine

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* Dio. Cassius, p. 781.

† Suetonius, Life of Cæsar, 11.

‡ Decline and Fall. vol. ii. pp. 83, 84, 85.

§ Decline and Fall, vol. ii. pp. 84, 85.

‖ The well-known and affecting incident of Androcles and the Lion is, however, said to have taken place in the Circus Maximus.—Vide Aul. Gell. Noct. Att. 7.

¶ The Consualia, *Ludi Consuales*, or games sacred to Consus, the god whose hidden altar was in every circus, took place in August. The *Ludi Magni*, sacred to the great gods, Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, were celebrated in September. The Secular games were only once given in a century, or 110 years, and not regularly even then. They were for the safety of the Empire, and were in honour of Apollo and Diana.

Villa to assist in defraying the enormous expense of the games he gave during his Ædileship ; and when he set off on the expedition into Spain, he was, by an enormous sum, worse than nothing.* He exhibited a fight of gladiators in such numbers as to frighten the Senators.† Yet all the cost he lavished upon these games, scarcely compensated for the umbrage he gave to the people by employing himself in writing in his tablets during their representation. Cæsar well understood the value of time, but here forgot that policy demanded its sacrifice.

At a very different period, when, after crossing the Rubicon, he entered by force the city which he had won the right to enter five times in triumph, he exhibited games which might be called the funeral games of the liberties of Rome—the splendour of which was so great, that in the ardour of the people to see them, a crowd of plebeians, and two senators, were killed in the press. At that time, two senators publicly exhibited themselves as gladiators ;‡ and in more degenerate times, even women of rank fought like common gladiators in the amphitheatre.§

Previous to the games, the grand procession of the images of the gods, drawn in the *Thensa*, or sacred car, took place ; and in later times, the statues of the Emperors were borne along with them. The cavalcade of the chariots and horses destined for the sports, formed the *Pompa Circensis*, sacred to Apollo.

The signal for commencing the games was given by the Emperor. It is related, that once when the people were extremely clamorous from the delay, Nero, who was at table, hastily threw his napkin out of the balcony of the Imperial Palace, into the Circus below, and that it after-

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* Plutarch's Life of Julius Cæsar. And yet, during his first consulship he had stolen 3000lb. weight of gold out of the Capitol, and replaced it with the same quantity of gilt brass.—Suetonius, J. Cæsar, 54.

† Suetonius, J. Cæsar. 10. ‡ Tacitus, Ann. xv. 32.

§ Suetonius. (Domit. 4.) Women fought as gladiators, and virgins ran races in the Stadium. Even Augustus made Roman Knights act upon the stage, and fight as gladiators, till it was prohibited by the senate, which seemed still to retain some portion of its ancient power and virtue. Suet. Aug. 43. In Nero's *Juvenalia*, *aged* matrons, as well as senators, used to perform. Suet. Nero, 6.

wards became the established signal; *mittere mappam* was the word. It strikes me, however, that the allusions to this signal and phrase occur in the classics at an earlier period than Nero's reign.

The cars were drawn up ready to start in front of the *Carceres*, or car-houses, and were confined in the same line by a rope held by two statues of Mercury (probably Termini,) which was withdrawn on the signal being given. A furrow filled with white chalk, called *alba linea*, was the line of victory—the last line.* Horace makes a beautiful allusion to this, when he says, "Mors *ultima linea* rerum est."

The *Aurigæ*, or charioteers, were divided into four permanent and contending factions, the distinguishing colours of which were, white, red, blue, and green.

These colours are supposed to have borne some mystic reference to the elements—that white distinguished the air; red, fire; green, the earth; and blue, the ocean. They have also been said to represent the four seasons of the year; and spring, summer, and winter, may indeed be supposed to be green, red, and white; but why should autumn be blue?

The supporters of these different colours were called Partisans—and deserved the name, for they adhered in their attachment to the colours, regardless of the merits of the horses, charioteers, &c., and were exhilarated or depressed as their colour triumphed or was defeated. History bears mournful testimony to the deadly feuds waged between the green and blue factions at Constantinople, in the latter days of the Empire.† This permanent attachment to particular colours, however, did not prevent betting from going on to an immense extent, both in the Circus and Amphitheatre.‡ Four chariots, one of every

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* It is curious that the same custom prevails in Italy to this day. At the Carnival races in the Corso, the horses, each held back by several men, are ranged behind a cord drawn across the street, which is loosened at the signal for starting, and the poor animals, goaded by the beating of the spikes of steel, and the gunpowder burning on their backs, rush on with a madness that is called spirit.

† Procopius De Bell. Got. states, that upwards of 50,000 were murdered in these affrays.

‡ Suetonius, Life of Domit. Plin. Ep. ix.

colour, started in each course. Two new colours, the gold and the purple, were added by Domitian,* and then six chariots, one of each colour, started at once. Each course consisted of seven circuits round the *Spina*. These circuits were marked by the removal of one of the seven eggs, and seven dolphins, from the two extremities of the *Spina*. The dolphins, it is supposed, were used as marks in honour of Neptune, the patron god of the games; and the eggs in honour of Castor and Pollux, who, as every one knows, were hatched like chickens, and were the equestrian gods.

The victor of each course (*missus*,) or, as we should call it, of each heat, placed his car in the *Carceres*, or car-houses, which were thirteen in number, twelve double, capable of containing two cars, and one single. For as a hundred cars generally ran in a day, there were, consequently, twenty-five victorious, which are said to have started together for the last grand course; after which, the victor or victors, crowned, issued out of the Triumphal Arch, at the oval end of the Circus, bearing his palm of victory in his hand, and followed by the acclamations of the multitude.

The *Spina* was always nearer to the oval, and farther from the square end of the Circus, in order to give room for the cars to start.

Sometimes cars with two horses (*Bigæ*,) but more frequently cars of four abreast (*Quadrigæ*,) (for mares were preferred to horses for chariot races,) contended in the Circus games. Sometimes, but rarely, cars with six horses, or *Sejugi*, ran; and I remember seeing a gem, on which cars were represented with ten horses abreast. Nero, if I remember right, exhibited races of chariots drawn by four camels.

In the Vatican are preserved a beautiful marble *Biga*, or car drawn by two horses, and the statue of an *Auriga*, or charioteer, whose hand bears the palm of victory. The costume is peculiarly elegant; his tunic, or robe, is bound with a zone formed of a great number of small cordons.

* Suetonius, Life of Domit. 7.

The bass reliefs, preserved in the same chamber of the Vatican, and also at the Villa Albani,* give a very lively representation of the Circus races. You see the *Carceres*, the *Spina*, the *Metæ*, the eggs, and the dolphins—little fluttering Loves sitting on the horses, and impelling their ardent speed, or overthrown with the cars upon the ground, and crushed beneath their whirling wheels. Such accidents unfortunately continually occurred, though men, not cherubs, were the victims. At every exhibition of circus games, the dead and the dying were carried out amidst the shouts and exultation of the victors. Thus the same character of cruelty seemed to pervade every amusement of the ancient Romans; and modern nations, humanized by a purer faith, may retaliate the epithet of barbarians on the masters of the world.

It was astonishing the fondness of the people for these games. "*Panem et Circenses*,"† was the popular cry; and they were content under the enormities of any tyrant who bestowed upon them abundance of these.

If the Parisians are like the ancient Romans in nothing else, they certainly resemble them in this passion for "*pain et plaisir*."

One only of all the Circuses of ancient Rome remains, but it is in better preservation, I believe, than any other in the world. It stands on the *Via Appia*, beside the tomb of Cecilia Metella, and it is called the Circus of Caracalla, though there is no other reason for believing that Emperor ever built any Circus at all, than that a medal of his reign bears a Circus on its reverse, which may just as probably commemorate a restoration or enlargement of the Circus Maximus, as the erection of a new one. And even granting that he did build a Circus, since the site is unknown, placing it here is purely conjectural. The striking inferiority, too, in its structure, —the coarse clumsy bricks, and the wretched style of building—in which bits of stone, tiles, and broken pieces

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* In the frieze of the oval vestibule at the head of the stairs, and also in some detached bassi relievi.

† —— atque duas tantum res anxius optat
Panem et Circenses.—*Juvenal*, Sat. x. l. 80.

of marble, are coarsely plastered together to form its walls, present such a contrast to the noble *Thermæ* of Caracalla, that we can scarcely consider it a work of the same date. It has been called, and upon as slender grounds, the Circus of Gallienus; and the meanness of the structure, at least, is more consonant to the degeneracy of the arts at that period.

But however unsupported by probability or evidence, it has now a prescriptive right to the name of the Circus of Caracalla; and the Circus of Caracalla it must therefore be called.

The walls of this Circus have scarcely even been partially destroyed, and their circuit is still entire. Whether its ancient pavement, or any remains of it, are still to be found, I know not, for its marshy arena is now covered with grass of emerald verdure; and when we last visited it, a flock of sheep were peacefully grazing in it.

The *Spina*, though grass-grown, still remains. We observed that, besides being nearer to the oval end, in order to allow room for the cars to start from the square end; it is also nearer the left than the right side, by about thirty feet, I should suppose; the reason of which may probably be, that some of the cars would be left behind in rounding the further *Meta*, and consequently less space be necessary on the further side.

Beneath the extremity of the *Spina*, nearest the square end, there is a small subterranean cavity, which has evidently been the altar-place of *Consus*. The obelisk now in the Piazza Navona, once adorned the *Spina* of this Circus. The *Metæ*, which were about twelve feet distant from the ends of the *Spina*, have disappeared; and, indeed, they seem to have been formed of perishable materials; those in the Circus Maximus, which were gilt by the Emperor Claudius, being of wood.* From the *Meta* preserved at the Villa Albani, they seem each to have been composed of three cones, or pyramids.

The triumphal gate through which the victor of victors issued at the oval end of the Circus, is still entire;

* Suetonius, Life of Claudius.

but there are no remains of the Carceres, or division for the cars at the opposite extremity.

These *Carceres*, which extended along the *whole* breadth of the Circus, according to the modern books and plans,* and explanations, and antiquaries, were completely filled with the twenty-five cars of the victors; all of which, they say, started together on one side of the *Spina*, in little more than *one-half* the breadth of the Circus, for the last course;—in other words, that they could run in half the space they filled when standing. I could not have believed that even an antiquary could have made such an egregious assertion, if I had not heard it with my own ears in this very Circus.

Independent of this absurd paradox, and in despite of all the antiquaries in the world, I maintain it to be a physical impossibility that twenty-five cars, or even half that number, could have found room to stand, much less to drive abreast, on one side of the Spina of this Circus; nor is there a single person, of plain understanding, to whom I have put the question, from one of the first mathematicians of the age, to Jacob the groom, who has not agreed with me in this opinion.

In the Circus Maximus, indeed, they might have found room for this number to have run together, for anything I know to the contrary; but in this Circus it is a perfect impossibility.

It is computed that this Circus could contain upwards of 20,000 spectators. There are two towers at the end where the Carceres stood, one of which, it is supposed, was intended for the trumpeters or musicians, and the other for the judges of the race.

A tower on the right side is still standing, and there are some remains of one on the left, not, however, exactly facing it.

One of these, we may suppose, was intended for the Emperor and his court; and though the seat of these distinguished personages is understood to have been in the *Podium*,† where the vestal Virgins, Senators, and those

* Pauvinius Ludi Circensis, Bianchini, &c.
† The front row.

of consular rank, had also the right of sitting, *Cæsar* may not have chosen to share the same seat with them, and the tower may have been adopted as the more complete distinction of a later age. The balcony in the Imperial Palace, from which the Emperor is said to have viewed the games in the Circus Maximus, is a similar situation. The right of sitting on the *Pulvinar*, the couch appropriated to the images of the gods, was conferred upon Julius Cæsar* and enjoyed by all the Emperors. Augustus, we are told, frequently looked at the games of the Circus from thence, or from the apartments of his friends or Freedmen.†

Right of place in the Circus was not conceded to any of the privileged orders till the reign of Claudius, when separate places were assigned for the Senators ;‡ and in the reign of Nero,§ the Roman Knights obtained a situation behind them, but distinct from the people. Seats in the orchestra of the Theatre, and the Podium of the Amphitheatre, had been granted to the Senators at a much earlier period ;‖ and before the close of the republic, fourteen rows behind them were allotted to the Equestrian Order.¶

Leaving the Circus, we pass through a door at the end, where the *Carceres* stood, into a large square, enclosed with high walls, of the same date and construction as the

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* Sueton. Cæs. 76.

† Sueton. August. 45. Augustus exhibited public games forty-seven times. Suet. 34.

‡ Suetonius Claudius, 321.

§ Tacitus, Ann. lib. xv. cap. 32.

‖ It was in A. U. 558, in the consulate of Cornelius Scipio.

¶ In A. U. 686. This privilege was procured for them by a man whom Dion. (36) calls Roscius Otho Tribune, and Plutarch (Life of Cicero) Marcus Otho Prætor. It is related that his appearance in the theatre once raised so violent a tumult—a sort of O. P. riot—between the people who hissed, and the Knights who applauded him, that the most serious consequences were apprehended ; when Cicero hastened to the theatre, called upon the people to follow him to the Temple of Bellona, and there, by the force of his unpremeditated eloquence, so totally changed the current of their feelings, that they returned to their places, and overwhelmed with shouts of applause the very man whom, a few minutes before, they were ready to tear in pieces. It is easy to inflame to madness the passions of the multitude ; but so suddenly and completely to allay their fury, was, indeed, an unparalleled triumph of eloquence.

Circus itself, which has evidently been divided into small regular compartments, like stalls, of stables, or small coach-houses. In the centre of this place stands a brick building of a better age, which some antiquaries say was a temple, and that they can plainly see where the portico of six columns was attached to the front, and where the steps led up to it, and where the statue of the god stood in it. I have long ago been convinced that I have not antiquarian eyes; and a decisive proof of it is, that I could see none of these things. Other antiquaries again see, with equal clearness, that this was nothing but a *Carceres*, or car-house, and that the surrounding walls, which the first party call a *Temenos*, or holy enclosure for their temple, were divided into stalls for horses. To this is rejoined by the believers in the temple—indignant at its degradation—that it is evidently a building of an earlier date than the Circus; and who would build a Carceres, at least a hundred years before a Circus? They of the Carceres side, in turn, reply, that it *may* have been a building of a more ancient date, not originally designed for the purpose, but it *must* have been converted into a Carceres, for they see the places for the cars; at the same time, they positively deny that it ever was a temple.

An acute writer of our own country thinks it was a *Serapeon*, upon the supposition that the Circus was Caracalla's, and that Serapis was peculiarly the object of that Emperor's worship. It is certain that the Altar of Serapis, now in the Capitol, with an inscription sacred to this deity, was found near the neighbouring Church of San Sebastiano.

I shall not pretend to give an opinion on the knotty point, of what this building was, or was not; much less repeat more of the multifarious and clashing conjectures that have been made as to its ancient use or purpose. At present, it has been used to support a most wretched sort of *Casino*, which, like most of those erections near Rome, has dwindled from serving the pleasures of princes, to the abode of *Vignaiuoli*. Around it, in the adjoining vineyards, are many ruins, whose date and destination are equally involved in obscurity. One of them, without the smallest foundation, has been called at ran-

dom the vestiges of the famous Temple of Virtue and Honour, built by Marcellus, and restored by Vespasian; although that stood at the ancient *Porta Capena*,* from which this spot is more than three miles distant.

That there may have been temples in and around this, as well as other Circuses, is indeed highly probable; and many of the mouldering walls we see may be their remains, although we cannot now distinctly trace them. The only building in sufficient preservation to enable us to discover its nature, is an unknown tomb, one of the many which lined the Appian Way. I believe it was called the tomb of the family of Servilia, until the real remains of that were found, and erected by Canova, a little further upon this road. Its vaulted roof, forming a four-sided quadrangular pyramid, is a very singular piece of architecture. It stands immediately *without* the wall of the stable—or *Temenos* of the Temple—or whatever it may be—on the side nearest the Circus.

The Circus of Sallust stood near the Porta Collina, and it is well worth while to pay a visit to the deserted spot, once occupied with the luxurious gardens of the historian, in the midst of which it was situated; for its site, its form, and size, are still very apparent; and though not a stone of the building remains, the very ground is not without its interest. On the sloping bank, once lined with marble seats, and filled with crowds of Roman spectators, the leafless vine is straggling among briars, and the wild flowers of the field blooming in unrestrained luxuriance.

The pomp of the Secular Games that were celebrated here in honour of Apollo, have been commemorated in the strains of poets, panegyrists, and satirists. Shattered relics of ancient splendour—columns of transparent Oriental alabaster, and giallo antico—pavements of the richest mosaics—and entire porticos of the rarest marbles, have been dug up in immense quantity from beneath the vines and wild weeds, that perhaps still cover even more precious remains.

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* Plutarch—Life of Marcellus.

In the most luxurious era of luxurious Rome, these gardens were noted for their luxury, and were the favourite resort of Nero.*

The Egyptian obelisk, now at the *Trinità de Monti*, which was found here, could not have been erected by Sallust, because he died before the conquest of Egypt. It must have been placed here by Augustus, or some of the later Cæsars.

The ruins of the house of Sallust still stand by the side of his Circus. You may ascend by a weed-covered staircase to the second story, where, not many years ago, we were told, some few vestiges of ancient painting were to be seen, and where, even when I first visited it several patches of mosaic flooring still remained. But the last time I was there, every trace of them had disappeared—carried off, as the countryman who shows the place informed us, by the *Forestieri*.

Nearly adjoining to the ruined habitation of the historian, are the remains of the octagonal brick temple already mentioned, supposed to have been the Temple of *Venus Erycina*.

It would appear that, although the Circus of Sallust was not built till the reign of Augustus, its site was sometimes used as such, in case of emergency, even in republican times; for we read, that when the Circus Maximus was overflowed by the Tiber, the games were celebrated before the Temple of *Venus Erycina*.†

The young *Vignaiuolo* showed us, near this temple which he learnedly denominated the Temple of Vesta and the House of Sallust, which he called the House of the Vestal Virgins—a hole through which he declared those vestals were put who had violated their vows of chastity. Now, it is true that the *Campus Sceleratus*, in which these guilty and unfortunate vestals were buried alive, was a little beyond the ancient Porta Collina, and consequently in this vicinity, though its exact site is unknown; but that Vesta ever had a temple, or her vestals

* Vide Tacitus, Ann. 14. † Livy, lib. xxx. cap. 28.

a habitation here, is a secret known only to my friend the Vignaiuolo.

From hence, extending all along the side of the Circus, are immense walls, strengthened with solid buttresses, built against the Quirinal Hill.

At the corner of this wall stands a Casino, built, I believe, by the Barberini family, but which, apparently, has shared in their fortunes, and no longer serves the purposes of pleasure.

Beneath it, we had heard and read, might still be seen a few of the stones of the walls of Servius Tullius. How eagerly we looked, you may imagine! We turned the corner of the Casino, and sought along the base of the wall, till at last, near its second angle, we actually found, low down and half hidden with long grass and weeds, a few squares of gray peperin stone!

Our transport you can never conceive. The original walls of Republican Rome! The venerable work of her kings, that we had searched for so long, and so vainly! Did we see them—nay, more, actually touch them at last? The belief might be delusive, but that was no matter, it did just as well. Besides, all the old antiquaries, both dead and alive, describe these ancient walls to have passed exactly in this direction, beneath this very Casino, and believe these stones to be their remains,—so why might not we? I never made any question of it, for my part.

In returning, the Vignaiuolo, who seemed to take to heart our incredulity about the House of the Vestal Virgins, besought us once more to look at it, and he was sure we would be convinced.

He gave us an account of their manner of interment, which nearly convulsed us with laughter. But seriously, the frequency of this dreadful punishment is to me one of the most extraordinary circumstances in the annals of Rome. Was it not wonderful, that the most sacred oaths, the most solemn ties, the feelings of honour, the dread of infamy, and the prospect of the most horrible of deaths, could not restrain six noble ladies from violating the laws of chastity, even for a limited term of years? For at the age of thirty, the duties of their vocation

were over, and it was lawful to marry, although it was not accounted honourable or auspicious so to do.

At this day, in our own country, not six virgins, perhaps not one, could be found of similar rank, although under no peculiar obligations, who had committed the crime for which so many Vestals suffered.

Whilst we were listening to their pathetic story, as recounted by the Vignaiuolo, some pretty *Contadine* came up to us, attended by their rustic swains; and after looking into the hole, pitied the Vestal Virgins, ("*Poverine!*") shrugged their shoulders, and laughing, thanked their stars and the Madonna, that poor *Fanciulle* were not buried alive for such things now-a-days.

Their dark eyes sparkled coquettishly, and their long shining black hair, (for it was a *Giorno di Festa*,) was plaited and coiled round the back of their heads, and fastened with an immense silver bodkin, or rather skewer, richly ornamented with carving, and tipped with a jewel. Their necks were hung round with coral necklaces and gold chains; and the purple sleeves of their vests were tied to their shoulders with large bows of sky-blue riband, leaving a vacuum, through which peeped out the full white sleeve of the chemise. The shoe was decorated with a buckle, which, for size and splendour, might have served our great-great-grandmothers. These pretty peasants lived close by; and indeed it is amusing to see the variety of rustics that live within the walls of Rome, with as little of the air of a city as if they had never approached one. This is the holyday dress of most of the lower orders of females in this immediate neighbourhood, but every little village among the hills has its own distinguishing peculiarity of costume, from which they never deviate.

Setting the dirt apart, the dresses, especially of the mountaineers, are very picturesque: their forms and faces, and the easy unrestrained grace of air and attitude, often recall to you that they are born upon a classic soil.

But how have I wandered from the games of the Circus to the dresses of the Italian peasantry? I don't,

however, remember that I have any thing more to say about either. So, farewell for the present.

LETTER XXVI.

ROMAN THEATRES.

I HAVE already observed, that the severity of the Republican law permitted no places of public amusement except Circuses, which were privileged, because the Circus Games were religious ceremonies, given in honour of the gods, and consecrated by the institution of the deified Romulus.

Plays were first introduced into Rome in order to stop a pestilence.* The usual expedient for effecting this—that of creating a Dictator for the purpose of driving a nail into the door of the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus—had been tried, and proved inefficacious. Nay, the *Lectisternium*, a public entertainment to a party of the gods, had been given without success. Their statues had lain for eight days in magnificent beds, ranged round a table, upon which a sumptuous banquet was daily served up to them. But they ate it, as Jupiter ate his annual feasts in the Capitol, by proxy; the Epulones, or priests, who had the care of providing it, regularly and punctually performing that ceremony.† According to the best authorities, Latona, with her twin children Apollo and Diana,

* Livy, lib. vii. cap. 2. It was in the year of Rome 389.

† It would appear that the inferior servants of the altar assisted in this pious duty. For Livy relates, (lib. ix. cap. 30,) "That the musicians who played upon the flute before the sacrifices, took the affront at being prohibited by the Censors from eating at the banquet of the Gods in the Temple of Jupiter, and went off in a body to Tibur, (Tivoli) from whence they were at last brought back by stratagem; for being made drunk, they were conveyed home in wagons when asleep. The privilege of eating in the temple was restored to such as were employed to play before the sacrifices."

occupied one bed; Mercury and Hercules another, and Neptune the third.

Throughout Rome the people feasted in the *Cavædium* in front of their houses, making welcome every guest. The prisons were cleared, the prisoners liberated, and the bitterest enemies met together as friends.*

But all this lying in bed, and feasting, and shaking of hands, had been done in vain. The pestilence still continued unabated; and therefore, to appease the incensed deities, actors were sent for from Etruria, who appear to have performed pantomimes rather than plays; for, "without reciting any kind of poetry, they danced gracefully, in the Tuscan manner, to the flute."

In the midst of these religious ceremonies, a sudden inundation of the Tiber nearly drowned both actors and spectators, and effectually put a stop to the performances for the time. But henceforward, Satires, (*Saturæ*,) a licentious extempore sort of buffoonery borrowed from the Etruscans, seem occasionally to have been represented in Rome; and some years afterwards, "regular plays" were written and performed by Livius Andronicus, who, according to the custom of the age, was at once their author and sole actor, and sung them to the flute. Actors for the several parts of the play, was, however, at last introduced, but singing to the flute still formed an essential part of dramatic representations.

The Oscan farce, so called from the *Osci*, a people of Campania, next became popular. In Rome this description of plays was called *Atellanæ*,† but their performance was confined to the Roman youth, and professed actors were not allowed to degrade them by their representations.‡

Pantomimes seem also to have been favourite representations with the Romans; and although in early times the performers (who were called *Mimi*, or *Pantomimi*) used to employ speech as well as action; yet, after the

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* Livy, lib. vii.

† Probably from Atella, (now Aversa,) a city between Capua and Naples.

‡ Vide Livy, lib. vii. cap. 2. from which this sketch of the Roman stage is principally taken.

close of the Republic, the Roman pantomimes, like those of the present day, were entirely expressed by dancing, gesture, and dumb show.

It therefore appears that plays were originally introduced from Etruria,* and not from Greece, whence the Romans usually derived their arts and improvements. But, in later times, the Grecian drama, with its accompaniments of the chorus, the music, the dances, and masked actors for every separate part, was brought upon the Roman stage; with this difference, that in the theatres of Greece, the scene, which was narrow, was occupied only by the actors, while the chorus, &c. filled the orchestra; but in Rome, all the performers, of whatever kind, were upon the stage, which was therefore deeper than in Greece, and the orchestra was only used for the seat of the Consuls and Senators.

The regular Roman comedy, indeed, was confessedly an imitation, or rather a translation from the Grecian; Plautus and Terence owned Menander and Aristophanes for their masters; and although we may not refuse the Umbrian baker, and the Carthaginian slave, the praise of original genius, the inferiority of their works was acknowledged by the Romans themselves. They thought it, indeed, higher praise,—

"Græcas transferre quam proprias scribere."

It was, however, singular, that the Roman language should receive from a Carthaginian its highest purity and perfection. The style of Terence was unrivalled.

It is well known that in Greece dramas were first performed at the feasts of Bacchus, and indeed they always continued to be tinctured with no small share of their primitive licentiousness. In memory of their origin, the ancient statues of the Tragic and Comic Muse have their brows bound with a garland of vines.† But from whence

‡ The Latin name of an actor, and of the dramatic art,—Hister, Histrionia,—were Etruscan words.

* For instance, those in the Vatican, and in most ancient bass reliefs and gems.

the Grecians derived the drama, it would be vain to inquire. We can carry the invention no higher; for Egyptian antiquity, I believe, affords no trace of any sort of theatrical representation; and we have but obscure lights as to the Etruscan stage, and may doubt if it ever reached beyond pantomimic entertainments of music and dancing, or improvisatorial recitations, of which the actors were authors.

But dramas, of whatever kind, were in those days exhibited at Rome in places constructed of leafy boughs of trees,* in tents and booths,—or, at best, in temporary or moveable erections; somewhat superior perhaps in dignity to the cart of Thespis, or the scaffold of Susarion, though apparently not much more luxurious in point of accommodation; for in a passage of some classic author which dwells in my memory, though I cannot recall where I met with it, it is mentioned, that these temporary theatres were not allowed to be furnished with seats, lest the people should consume too much time in such frivolous diversions.

In spite of the prohibition of permanent theatres, however, which continued in force during the whole period of the Republic, it was during the Republic that Roscius lived and died; and thus, by a strange apparent inconsistency, the theatrical art had reached its highest perfection before there was a theatre.

Livy, indeed, mentions the erection of a theatre for plays in the Capitol, near the Temple of Apollo,† almost two hundred years before the fall of the Republic; but it must have been one of those temporary theatres which were removed after each series of dramatic exhibition was over; though the magnificence of some of these—during that sudden burst of luxury in which the Republic expired, and the empire received its birth—far surpassed all the permanent theatres of modern times.

The theatre of M. Scaurus, which, according to Pliny,‡ contained 80,000 spectators, was adorned with three hun-

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* Ovid somewhere calls them "Nemorosa Palatia."
† Livy, lib. xl. cap. 51.— A. C. 174.
‡ Pliny, Nat. Hist. lib. xxx. c. 16.

dred and sixty columns, and three thousand statues of bronze ; the three orders of the stage were composed of marble, of glass, and of gilded tablets, and every part of it was finished with the same profuse and costly decorations.

Scaurus, when Roman Ædile, despoiled the Temples of Sicyon of their beautiful paintings to adorn this temporary theatre.

Pliny* also describes another temporary theatre, which was semicircular, and held two distinct audiences for plays ; but when the performances of the stage ended, it turned round upon an axis with all the spectators in their seats, and, in some manner inconceivable to us, formed an amphitheatre.

But the first theatre that was built of stable materials in Rome, was the Theatre of Pompey ;† and yet not even his power and popularity could enable him, in this respect, to infringe the ancient laws, without incurring severe censure and opposition. He was even obliged, in order to save it from demolition by the Censor, to make a nominal pretence, not meant to impose upon any one, but merely to elude the law, that the theatre was only intended to contain the people who assembled to worship at the Temple of Venus Victorious, (Victrix,) which he purposely erected in it.

We may see in every instance how earnestly Pompey and Cæsar courted popularity, by the care and expense they bestowed to indulge the reigning passion of the many-headed multitude for shows and entertainments of all kinds.

Cicero informs us, that, at the dedication of this theatre, his friend Esopus, one of the most celebrated actors of antiquity, performed for the last time, but had not strength to go through his part. The dramatic exhibitions given on this occasion, do not seem, from Cicero's description of them, to have been of the very highest order ; nor, indeed, to have materially differed from the *Spectacles* exhibited in our day on the London boards.

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* Pliny, Nat. Hist. lib. xxxv. c. 40.
† Tacitus, Ann. lib. xiv. cap. 20.

"A thousand mules prancing about the stage, in the tragedy of Clytemnestra," or, "whole legions accoutred in foreign armour, and drawn up on the stage like mock armies in battle array, in the play of the Trojan horse,"* remind us not a little of the melo-dramas of Covent Garden and Drury Lane. But, in fact, the Roman people, unlike the Grecians, had little taste for the pure drama, or for intellectual amusement of any kind. So long as their eyes were dazzled with the pomp of a spectacle, and their senses agitated with the exertions of physical force—with feats of danger and difficulty, and mortal contention—they were contented. They frequently interrupted the plays, by loudly calling out for shows of gladiators, wild beasts, &c.

> . . . . . media inter carmina poscunt
> Aut ursum, aut pugiles; his nam plebecula gaudet.
> HOR. lib. ii. Epist. i. ver. 186.

Terence complains† that the public attention was drawn from his play (Hecyra) by the exhibitions of a rope-dancer. This happened at its first representation. At its second, some years after, the people again deserted it, to see a combat of gladiators. But Hecyra was by far the least popular of the comedies of Terence.

Pompey's Theatre was dedicated, not only by the effusions of the Tragic or Comic Muse, but by the bloody tragedy of the slaughter of five hundred lions, and the farce of a battle of elephants with armed men.‡ The elephants were all masacred—but the piteous cries of these poor dying animals, whom the philosophers of antiquity, as well as the vulgar, believed to be endowed with something more than "half reasoning" faculties, seem to have filled the minds, even of the Roman populace, with pity and horror.§ "Magnificent combats of wild beasts were exhibited every morning and afternoon,

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* Cic. Epist. lib. ii. cap. 5.

† In his prologue to Hecyra. "Ita populus studio stupidus in funambulo animum occupabat."

‡ Plutarch's Life of Pompey, and Cicero, Epist. Fam. lib. ii. cap. 5.

§ Dion, lib. xxxix.

during five successive days ;" besides wrestling and other athletic games. Cicero complains heavily of the mortal ennui and disgust he experienced during the whole of these exhibitions.

This theatre was built on the improved plan of one which Pompey had seen at Mytelenæ.* and stood near his Curia, on the present *Campo de Fiore ;* but there is not a single vestige of it remaining. It was rebuilt by Tiberius, and again by Claudius.†

Among the fragments of an ancient plan of Rome, there is a theatre believed to be that of Pompey, as rebuilt by Claudius ; from the portico, the colonnades, and the public walks adjoining it, which exactly agree with all the descriptions of it.

From the orchestra in which the Emperor,‡ the Consuls, and Senators sat, the *gradii*, or rows of seats, not depicted in the plan, rose gradually in the same semicircular line, one above another, to the top but were divided by two *precinctiones ;* one in which the equestrian order sat, and another which was common to the plebeians, and above which there was only one circle of seats, supposed to be intended for the women. The seats from top to bottom were vertically cut by narrow stair-cases, and every division between them was called a *cuneus*—from its wedge-like form. The straight line divided the orchestra from the stage. The *Scena*, which, unlike our scenes, was usually fixed, was magnificently adorned with all the conjoined embellishments of architecture, statuary, and painting. In front of it was the *Proscenium*, where the actors appeared, which was terminated by two grand semicircular recesses on each side of the central one. In front of the Proscenium was the *Pulpitum*, where the actors performed.

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* Plutarch's Life of Pompey. † Suet. Claud. 21.

‡ Suetonius relates, that at the reopening of Pompey's theatre, Claudius, having first paid his devotions in the upper part, descended through the *Cavea*, and seated himself upon his throne in the Orchestra. Augustus used to sit upon a curule chair like a Consul ; for it is related, that at the dedication of the theatre of Marcellus, his ivory seat broke down with him, and he fell upon his back. Suet. Aug. 43.

The plan of this theatre precisely resembles one of those at Pompeii. It has also the *Postscenium*, or covered porticos, usually occupied only by the actors who were not on the stage, but to which Vitruvius* tells us, the spectators retired for shelter when surprised by sudden rain, in which case the performances were necessarily suspended; for ancient theatres were almost invariably open,† and the spectators were shaded from the sun only by a moveable awning, which did not extend over the stage.

Before we begin to exclaim against the folly of the Greeks and Romans in this particular, let us remember, that without being guilty of any very gross absurdity, they might in these climates find the freshness of the open air preferable to the stifling atmosphere of an imprisoned crowd.

I have myself, with real enjoyment, seen plays in the open air in Italy, in that hour of delicious coolness which in summer precedes the setting of the sun, when no temptation could have induced me to have entered the walls of a closed theatre.

Beyond the *Postscenium*, were the beautiful public walks and magnificent colonnades, adorned with exquisite statues and paintings, so often alluded to by the poets, and which so long continued the favourite and fashionable promenade of the Romans.‡

Julius Cæsar intended to have built a theatre,§ to outvie in magnificence that of his rival; but he was prevented by death, and his design was carried into effect by Augustus, who built the theatre of Marcellus, which he named after his beloved nephew, the pride and promise of the Roman youth, whose untimely death Virgil commemorated in that eloquent and pathetic strain of sorrowing panegyric, which alone might have immortalized both the poet and the hero.

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* Vitruvius, lib. v. cap. 9. "Post scenum porticus sunt constituendæ uti cum imbres repentini ludos interpellaverint, habeat populus, quo se recipeat ex theatro,"&c.—"Uti sunt Porticus Pompeianæ.

† One of the theatres of Pompeii was covered. But this is the only instance of a *theatrum tectum* that I remember.

‡ Propertius, lib. ii. Eleg. 32. Martial, lib. ii. Epist. 14.

§ Suetonius, Julius Cæsar, 44.

Augustus dedicated this theatre by the slaughter of—I forget how many—hundreds of wild beasts; but afterward, like that of Pompey, it was used for dramatic representations only.

If the histrionic art was late in getting a legal footing in Rome, it was soon deprived of it, for Tiberius turned all the players out of Italy,* at the same time that he very consistently rebuilt the theatre of Pompey which had been burnt down.

The theatre of C. Balbus was built in the age and at the desire of Augustus.† Its site is unknown.

The vestiges of the once magnificent theatre of Marcellus,‡ are the only existing remains of the theatres of ancient Rome.

Like the Coosseum, it was built of Tiburtine stone, and consisted of four orders of Arcades, of which the Doric, the Ionic, and the Corinthian, are supported by semi-columns, and the attic by Corinthian pilasters.

Their architecture is considered superior to that of the Amphitheatre; and although nothing now remains of this once beautiful edifice except a very small portion of the two lower Arcades, their beauty is so perfect, that they serve as the canon of the true proportions of the Doric and Ionic orders, when used in the same building.

To the architect, therefore, these mutilated remains of the theatre of Marcellus may be useful, and in his eye beautiful; but to the common observer they can only be disgusting.

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* Tacitus, Ann. lib. iv. cap. 14.—The reasons assigned by the Emperor, in his address to the Senate, for exiling these unfortunate actors, were, "that they frequently raised seditious tumults, and introduced licentiousness into private families; and that the Oscan farce, formerly the contemptible delight of the vulgar, had now risen to such a pitch of universal popularity and enormity, that it required the authority of the senate to check it." By the obsequious conscript fathers, accordingly, "the players were expelled from Italy." By "the vulgar," who took delight in the contemptible Oscan farce, I presume Tiberius alluded to Cicero, Atticus, Pompey, &c. the friends of Roscius, and the constant attenders of the theatre, to admire his inimitable performances.

† Suet. Aug. 29.

‡ The statne of Augustus, erected after his death by Livia, stood near the theatre of Marcellus. Tacitus, lib. iii. cap. 64.

I have been told that a palace had been erected on the ruins of the theatre of Marcellus—but such a palace! Good heavens, could you but behold it! Could you but see the dens, surrounded by filth, and inhabited by abandoned vice, squalid penury, and revolting wretchedness, which bear the name!

The noble family of Orsini, (once so princely and powerful,) who possessed it, are literally beggars, and it is now inhabited by the lowest orders of the people.

Thinking that the inside might present something more pleasing than the exterior promised, we all entered upon a narrow staircase, which so grievously molested our olfactory nerves, that all the party, except myself, turned back at the threshold. I went through it, and got into a modern court adorned with a bass relief of a gladiator fighting with a lion, and two beautifully sculptured marble sarcophagi.

Nothing more was to be seen; I followed the internal sweep of one of the ancient corridors a little way, but was glad to return.

Like almost all the ruins of Rome, the theatre of Marcellus served, during the disastrous times of civil war, as the strong-hold of one of its turbulent nobles. It was, I think, the family of the Savelli who reigned here, the petty despots of the ancient mistress of the world.

LETTER XXVII.

PORTICOS.—THE PORTICO OF OCTAVIA.

Of all the noble Porticos of Ancient Rome, a fragment of the Portico of Octavia alone remains. It was one of the many works of magnificence with which Augustus adorned the city he enslaved; and in honour of his sister, the virtuous and neglected wife of Antony, he called it the Portico of Octavia, as he had already given the name of her lamented son to the adjoining theatre of Marcellus, to

which, indeed, it was an appendage. There the people used to loiter before the play began, and there they found shelter when driven from it by sudden storms.

The Portico of Octavia consisted of a double line of marble columns, enclosing a large oblong square; and although accessible at every intercolumniation, it had also two grand entrances in the narrower ends. This magnificent double colonnade was roofed, so as to give shelter and shade to those who walked, lounged, or talked within it. Thus the weather presented no obstacle to exercise or amusement, and at pleasure they could seek the open part in the centre, where stood the Temples of Jupiter and Juno, the first in Rome that were built of marble.

Pliny relates, that, by mistake, the statues of the god and goddess were carried to the wrong temples; and the superstitious people, conceiving the stupidity of the porters to be the will of the deities, durst not remove them, so that the statue of Jove continued to stand in the Temple of Juno, and his was occupied by her image, although the sculpture and painting with which each was adorned represented the symbols of the deity for which they were originally designed.

These temples were built by Metellus, from which circumstance the Portico itself sometimes goes by his name. Many of the beautiful columns which composed it are built up in the miserable houses of the Jews which now cover its ancient site. We went to a wretched hole (No, 11, *Via di San Angelo in Pescheria*,) where we saw three magnificent fluted Corinthian columns of Grecian marble, supposed to be remains of the Temple of Juno, because that of Jupiter was Ionic. This is gathered from Pliny, who relates, that the Spartan architects who built this temple, being denied permission to put their names upon their work, devised a method of eluding this law. They were called *Saurus* and *Batracus*, which signify a lizard and a frog; and, accordingly, they carved the figures of these reptiles in the Ionic capitals of the temple. Now the little industrious minuteness of antiquaries has enabled them to detect an Ionic capital marked with these singular figures, in the old Church of Lorenzo *fuore le Mura*. This discovery was an event of great importance to all the tribe;

and Nardini, Venuti, and Winkelman, severally make mention of them, and enter into long discussions—which I will spare you—as to whether this be one of the columns in question or not.*

I was, however, amused with the downright decision of the author of one of the profound *Itinerarj* of Rome, upon the merits of this capital, which Winkelman (whom we have hitherto, it would seem, erroneously considered a tolerable critic) pronounced to be, "L'un des plus beaux chapiteaux de toute l'antiquité;" but which this great judge modestly assures us is far too bad to have been executed at any such period. "Winkelman," he says, "thought he had found, in one of the Ionic capitals of this church, the frog and lizard sculptured by the Spartan architects, Saurus and Batricu. "*Ma troppo sono infelici queste sculture per poterle referire al buon tempo di cui parla Plinio.*"

In the Portico of Octavia, it is said, painters used to exhibit their works for the admiration or criticism of the public. It was, besides, permanently decorated with paintings and statues by the most celebrated masters. Pliny particularly mentions a Venus of singular beauty, the work of Phidias, which stood in it ;† and as it is generally believed the Venus de Medicis was found here, I wonder it has never been supposed to be that very statue. The grace, beauty, and finish of its style, however, so remote from the severity and grandeur of that of Phidias, I should suppose, would prove it incontestably the work of a later and more polished age, even if it were certain that it was found in this Portico ; but, on the contrary, many pretend that it was discovered in the Villa Adriana. I should not have thought a Venus suited to the genius of Phidias, any more than laughing Cupids and Graces to the pencil of Michael Angelo, or a love song to the muse of Dante.

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* Pliny says, "in columbarum spiris ;" an epithet, one would think, sufficiently descriptive of the volutes of an Ionic column; bnt much cavilling has arisen upon it. In the Ionic capital at St. Lorenzo, the frog is sculptured instead of the rose, in the eye of one volute, and on the other the lizard, in its own natural posture, encircles the rose.

† Pliny, Nat. Hist. lib. xxxv. cap. 5.

One of the three public libraries which Rome possessed in the Augustan age, was in this Portico.

Another was in the Portico of Liberty, on the Aventine Mount, formed by Asinius Pollio, in the Republican age, which Pliny tells us was the first public library in the world; and the third in the Temple of the Palatine Apollo. Sylla carried off the library of Apellicon from Athens to Rome;* but we have every reason to believe that it was placed in his own house, and never became public property.

The remains of the Portico of Octavia stand in what I am convinced is the filthiest spot upon the whole face of the globe. It is the *Pescheria*, or fish-market;—the *Ghetto*, or crowded quarter where the Jews—whatever be their numbers—are condemned to reside; and while miles of uninhabited ground are comprised within the walls of Rome—while it becomes yearly more insalubrious from its desertion, and more deserted from its insalubrity—these poor Israelites are cooped up in a confined hole, the dirt, the stench, and the disgusting appearance of which it is utterly impossible to conceive.

I thought its smells were enough to breed a pestilence; but it is a singular, and apparently rather an unaccountable fact, that this very spot, with its narrow lanes, crowded population, and extremity of filth, is the healthiest quarter in Rome, and its inhabitants the most hardy and robust. This crowded population, indeed, must be considered its security against the scourge of the *malaria*, which affects the more deserted parts of Rome in exact proportion to their desertion; and, indeed, it is obvious that the city, but for its inhabitants, would be as unhealthy as the death-giving Campagna by which it is surrounded on all sides.

In opposition to all the rules that theory and experience have established in other towns; in Rome the most unhealthy parts are the high, the open, and the airy; and the most healthy, the low, the crowded, and the filthy.

Possibly the abundant gaps and discomforts of their houses, which, both in winter and summer, drive the in-

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* Strabo, lib. xiii. &c.

habitants to live a great deal out in the open air, and keep them thoroughly ventilated when they do stay within doors —as well as the fineness of the climate—may obviate some of the bad effects usually experienced in colder countries, from this condensed population and congregated filth. However this may be, the fact of its superior salubrity is undeniable.

The Roman Jews are said to be the descendants of the captives whom Titus led from Jerusalem. But Jews inhabited Rome long before that period; for at the death of Julius Cæsar, they were among the number of his mourners.* Claudius,† too, "banished all the Jews from the city, on account of the disturbances they were continually raising at the instigation of *one Chrestus.*" It was probably the doctrine of *Christ*, and not the cabals of any factious living Jew, that occasioned the commotions here alluded to.

But I must return again to the Portico of Octavia, in which, with all my efforts, I never advance any farther. Its remains, however, may soon be described. They consist of a small part of one of the ancient entrances, in which may be traced the sum total of four Corinthian columns, and three pilasters of white marble, much hidden by brick walls. These, with a part of the ancient pediment, blotched over with some ugly painted saints, are the sole ancient remains of the Portico. But you must go to both of the outsides, and examine well the inside, and hunt on foot amidst inconceivable filth, before you can see these broken brick walls, and half-hid columns. The tottering pediment has been supported by an arch built in the low ages, but with Roman brick. The cause of this singular care in propping up, instead of pulling down an old ruin, was explained when our Cicerone pointed out to us that this fragment of the Pronaos of the ancient Portico, has had the honour of serving as a court to a wretched little church behind it, called the Holy Angel of the Fish-Market—(*Sant' Angelo de' Pescheria.*) And as in those early times it was essential to every church to have a

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* Suet. Jul. Cæsar, 85. † Suet. Claudius, 25.

court in front of it, in imitation of the area of a Pagan temple, the poor remains of this noble portico were saved from destruction, because it was more troublesome and expensive to build a new court than to keep up the old one.

The brick arches at the sides (on the right and left of the modern arch in front,) are ancient, and are supposed to have formed the lateral entrances to the entrance of the Portico.

The inscription now remaining upon the Portico attests its restoration after fire, by Septimius Severus and Caracalla. I think there is nothing more worth notice about the Portico of Octavia, which, truth to say, is the most filthy, and about the least interesting, of the antiquities of Rome.

LETTER XXVIII.

THE AMPHITHEATRE.

The first Amphitheatre which we hear of at Rome, was built in the reign of Augustus, by Statylius Taurus,* and it is believed some vestiges of it, or of some other Amphitheatre, were discovered in an excavation that was once made upon Monte Citorio.† Caligula began an Amphitheatre which was left unfinished ;‡ Nero erected one of wood,§—and Trajan built one of stone and mortar, which was destroyed by Hadrian.‖ Excepting these, which for the most part were never finished, or at best were ephemeral, Rome possessed only the Flavian Amphitheatre—the stupendous Colosseum—the magnitude and magnificence of which, indeed, seemed to preclude the necessity of any other.

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* Suet. Augustus.
† Nardini, Roma Antica.
‡ Suet. Caligula.
§ Suet. Nero.
‖ Spartianus---Life.

The Colosseum is, however, a modern name; and whether it was derived from the colossal size of the building, or of the statue which stood before it—and whether the said statue was of marble or of bronze, of Apollo or of Nero—are points that have been much and vainly discussed. Upon these momentous questions I shall only observe, in the first place, that Pliny somewhere mentions—though I cannot recover the passage—that Vespasian substituted the head of Apollo for that of Nero upon his colossal statue—which, according to him, was one hundred and twenty feet high;—and, therefore, it seems probable, that the Colossus of the Amphitheatre was this identical body of Nero, provided with the new and less obnoxious head of Apollo; indeed, in those days, the heads of statues were taken off with nearly as little ceremony as those of the persons they represented,—and it was even common to make them with moveable heads, in order that the anticipated decapitation might be more easily accomplished. Secondly, I would observe, that, as it is still more unlikely that any statue of such magnitude—with whatever head—was standing there in the eighth century, when we hear for the first time of the Colosseum, I conceive the statue has nothing to do with the name, and that it has been derived from the magnitude of the building.

The Venerable Bede, who died in A. D. 735, and in whose writings this appellation is first found, records the memorable prophecy of the pilgrims of that age—"While the Colosseum stands, Rome will stand—when the Colosseum falls, Rome will fall—when Rome falls, the world will fall."*

The world was very near its fall, indeed, a few years ago, if its fate depended on that of the Colosseum, which would inevitably have tumbled down, had it not been propped by the immense buttress now raised against the tottering extremity of its broken circle, which was begun by the Pope, carried on by the French, and finished by the Pope. But I have begun at the wrong end, and have

* See concluding chapter of the Decline and Fall.

got to the fall of the Colosseum before I have related its erection.

This wonderful Amphitheatre was the work of only four years. Vespasian began to build it upon the site of Nero's great pond, which he had drained scarcely two years before his death; and two years afterwards, it was finished at the close of the short reign of Titus, who lived to dedicate it by the slaughter of five thousand wild beasts,* before he fell, the first victim of the inhuman Domitian, who was suspected of having commenced his remorseless career by the murder of his brother.†

The exterior of the Colosseum—or Flavian Amphitheatre, as it was called in the time of the Romans—is composed of four orders. The three first are Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian open arcades; and above them the attic is sustained by Corinthian pilasters. However deficient in some minuter points of correctness particular parts may be, no eye can fail to be struck with the grandeur and symmetry of the whole, which is, perhaps, the noblest building in the world. You gaze on it with unsatiated admiration; but the beauty and refinement of the arts which adorn it, form a striking contrast to the barbarism of the purposes for which it was erected. If I might be permitted to find out a fault, (and one must seek for it —it does not suggest itself,) I should say that the Doric is scarcely sufficiently massive‡ for the base of such a building; and that, in proportion to it, the Ionic and Corinthian orders are too solid. But the fault lies in the Doric, which gives the superincumbent orders an appearance of heaviness.

We miss the triglyphs in the Doric frieze; and though its plainness might be pardoned, and even thought to give greater simplicity to the whole, the repetition of the same frieze, in the Ionic, is offensive, and has an air of poverty.

In Rome, we see nothing of the ancient Grecian Doric

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* Suet. Titus, vii.

† And yet it is related, that this monster had at first such an abhorrence to the shedding of blood, that he mourned even over the death of animals, and endeavoured to prohibit the sacrifice of oxen.—Vide Suet. Dom.

‡ The height of the Doric columns is nine diameters and a half.

—the fluted columns without pedestals—the first and grandest of all styles of architecture. But however noble in itself, it would have been misplaced in this building. It would not have accorded with the superincumbent orders. Its proportions are too solid, and its simplicity too great, to harmonize with others. It should always stand alone, in its own native majesty, as in the incomparable Temples of Pæstum. But the Colosseum owes its beauty to the grandeur of the whole, rather than the perfection of the parts; its immensity awes us into admiration.

It certainly held eighty thousand, or, according to most accounts, eighty-seven thousand spectators; and by filling up the staircases, and standing wherever there was a space, upwards of one hundred thousand people are supposed to have crowded in to see the games. This computation, of course, includes the wooden galleries at the top.

In the *Podium*, or front circle, was the *Suggestus*, or canopied box of the Emperor, the seats of the Imperial Family, of the Vestal Virgins, Consuls, Senators, and all personages of the highest dignity in the state. They were defended, it is said, with a parapet, a grating, and horizontal spikes of iron, from the dangerous neighbourhood of the wild beasts. It is curious, however, that in the Amphitheatre of Pompeii, which remains as entire and fresh as if the games had been given yesterday, none of these safeguards are to be seen; and I could not help thinking, when I viewed it, that the Podium might be a dignified, but would be far from a desirable situation. That the august Romans, however, were effectually defended from the jaws of the lions, there can be no doubt; and, at all events, their safety signifies little to us now.

Above the *Podium*, the *gradus*, or enlarging circle of seats, were divided by a horizontal division into three *præcinctiones*, each of which comprised the rows contained in the height of one corridor. The first of these, which is calculated to have had twenty-four ranges of seats, was appropriated to the Equestrian order, or knights, whose badge of distinction was a gold ring. Like those of Consular rank, they were seated on cushions (*pulvilli.*) The second, supposed to have contained

sixteen rows, was occupied with the more honourable order of citizens; and the uncovered marble seats of the third præcinctio above, called *Popularia*, were filled with the unprivileged classes, diminishing in consequence as they ascended. Last of all, at the very top—as the most unworthy—sat the women in a wooden gallery; for that despised sex was by law excluded from the seats of the men, who appropriated all the best to themselves; an arrangement which, it must be acknowledged, argues a very unenviable state of society. This, too, was an improvement, or refinement in manners; originally they were not thus banished the presence of the lords of the creation. This gallery itself, according to some accounts, supported a terrace, from whence those excluded from every other station sought to obtain a distant peep of the games.

The ranges of seats which encircled the interior of the building, were exactly like steep steps, and were divided vertically by narrow stairs of more gradual ascent, which led straight from top to bottom, through all the *præcinctiones*, cutting the Amphitheatre perpendicularly into divisions. The space between each of these staircases was called, from its triangular or wedge-like form, a *Cuneus*.

There were so great a number of entrances, or *Vomitoria*, from the corridors, that the whole of this amazing crowd could assemble or disperse without the smallest difficulty or confusion; and to the Arena there was free access by the two great arches of entrance at the oval ends.

The staircases and seats were of marble, with which the whole of the interior is supposed to have been lined. The Arena was open, but the seats were shaded by a moveable canvass awning, (*vela*, or *velaria*,*) to protect the spectators from the sun. It was a favourite diversion of one of the Emperors (I forget which) to throw the sun suddenly full in the face of some of his favourites, by pulling the cords that regulated its motions. When

* Juvenal, Sat. iv. line 122.

the sun was insufferably hot, Caligula used to order the awning to be taken off, and forbid any one to be let out.* Over the Amphitheatre of Nero was extended a canopy of cloth, painted azure, to resemble the sky, and spotted with stars.

The only sports, I believe, except the naval fights of the Naumachia, ever exhibited in the Amphitheatre, were combats of wild beasts against gladiators, or of gladiators against each other.† Sometimes, indeed, the enlightened Romans seem to have enjoyed the exquisitely gratifying spectacle of wild beasts tearing to pieces condemned malefactors,‡ or innocent Christians exposed defenceless to their rage. Small bass reliefs found in the catacombs, and preserved in the *Museo Sacro* of the Vatican Library, represent these martyrs awaiting the loosening of the chained-up lion, raging to devour them. Human nature can scarcely bear to picture a situation of such overpowering horror, or adequately estimate the invincible constancy and sublime fortitude of those who voluntarily supported its tremendous tortures. While we adore the memory of the hero who braved a death of glory and honour, and the patriot who perished for his country amidst its plaudits and its tears, let us not be insensible to the transcendent virtue of the divine spirits who submitted to this revolting and ignominious end for the sake of their God. The cold-hearted ridicule of this deriding age, which has levelled its attacks against some of the noblest feelings of our nature, has not spared the memory of the Christian martyrs; and the absurd legends of monkish fraud and credulity have unhappily given support to its mockery. But the papal crown

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* Suet. Calig. 26. Nero carried imprisonment in places of amusement still farther. During his own musical performance in the Theatre at Olympia, he confined the unfortunate audience until children were born there, and several persons, feigning themselves dead, were carried out for their funeral. Suet. Nero, 23.

† The numbers and frequency of these sanguinary sports are almost beyond belief. After the triumph of Trajan over the Dacians, they were exhibited for four months, without the cessation of a single day. Ten thousand gladiators fought, and eleven thousand wild beasts were slain. Vide Dio, xlviii. 15.

‡ Suet. Calig. 27.

cannot debase the royalty of true virtue ; and the heart must be cold that will not worship its image, and pay homage to its worth, however taunted or reviled. Perhaps there may be others, like me, whose admiration is heightened by the internal consciousness, that the constancy they praise, they could not emulate.

In the reign of Caligula, the wild beasts for the Amphitheatre were *fed* with condemned criminals whenever cattle were dear!*

That brutal madman Commodus, who used to call himself Hercules, and go about dressed in a lion's skin, and brandishing a club, with his hair sprinkled with gold-dust, to imitate the glory of the sun, frequently fought in the Amphitheatre as a gladiator, and killed both gladiators and wild beasts. It is a thousand pities he had not rather been killed as a wild beast himself. He had once, indeed, very nearly been murdered here ; not in the arena, but in the private passage from the Imperial Palace to it, where he was attacked by the first conspirators, but unfortunately escaped from their hands.

When a gladiator was vanquished and thrown upon the ground, his life was not at the disposal of his antagonist, but of the spectators. If they granted him mercy, they pressed the thumb down ;† if they commanded his death, they held it up, and the conqueror instantly murdered him.

It is scarcely conceivable the possibility of the mandate, thus deliberately given, to plunge the dagger into the panting bosom of a disarmed and unoffending suppliant. Neither do I understand—since in such a multitude there must have been great diversity of opinion, and some at least, in every case, would be found to lean to the natural side of mercy—how the victor gathered the sense of the spectators from this sign.

The fall of the Amphitheatre may be rapidly traced. It was first repaired by Antoninus Pius. Under Macri-

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* Suet. Calig. 27.

† *Pollicem premere*, was the sign given to spare his life ; *Pollicem vertere*, to murder him. Pliny, lib. xxviii. cap. 5.

nus it was burnt—an accident, if an accident it was, that seems somewhat inexplicable, though it is said to have been occasioned by lightning.* The wooden gallery at the top, and all the seats, (which, it is supposed, were covered with wood,) were consumed, and such was the devastation, that during many years the games were obliged to be celebrated in the Circus, and the reigns and the repairs of three emperors were requisite for its restoration. The annals of Heliogabalus, and the medals of Alexander Severus and Gordian, celebrate their labours in its repairs and embellishments, though that term can scarcely be applied to the misshapen columns and hideous sculpture attributed to the degenerate reign of the latter emperor, which were dug up in the late excavations, and are now standing in the Arena.

Not to dwell upon the oscillations of damage and repair, it is certain that it must have been uninjured in the beginning of the fifth century, when the fights of gladiators were celebrated for the last time ;† and even in the sixth century,‡ when the combats of wild beasts with human beings for the last time moved the just indignation of the Christian Fathers.§

Even at a considerably later period, (the eighth century,) the Colosseum is supposed, from the reports of the pilgrims,‖ to have been entire ; nor is there any appearance of its destruction having begun till the eleventh century, when it was converted into the strong hold of a Roman baron ; and thus, by a sort of retributive justice, the building that ministered in one age to the guilty passion of the Romans for blood, became, in another, the instrument of their own oppression and destruction.

It was one of the numerous castles of the Frangipani

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* Dion. Erodian.

† A. D. 404. In presence of Honorius.

‡ A. D. 523. In the reign of Theodoric.

§ St. Augustin, I believe, inveighs against them with virtuous eloquence; but I quote his authority at second hand. In the preceding century, a Christian poet (Prudentius) had ventured to address, even to an imperial ear, a pathetic and spirited remonstrance against these savage combats, so revolting to religion and humanity.

‖ Vide Gibbon's Decline and Fall, last Chapter.

family, who seem to have possessed themselves of a system of fortresses erected on the ruins of Rome, and encircling the imperial palace of the Palatine, which they also occupied. The arch of Titus and of Constantine, the Septizonium of Severus, the ruined palace of the Cæsars, and the arch of Janus Quadrifrontis, were theirs; as well as the immense fabric of the Colosseum, to which Popes and Antipopes successively resorted for protection. It was stormed and besieged, taken and retaken; it was partially yielded to the Annibaldi; it was regained by the Frangipani; but though it changed its masters, it continued a fortress till the beginning of the fourteenth century, when its hostile occupation was finally relinquished.

Yet, even in that age, the blood of men and beasts was once more mingled in savage combat on this Arena. On the third of September, 1332, it was the scene of a bull-fight, attended with all the pomp and circumstance, and chivalrous spirit of a solemn tournament, but with a far more tragical termination—for eighteen of the young and noble champions who entered the lists, bearing on their shields romantic devices emblematical of their passion, perished in the unequal conflict with furious wild bulls, which they encountered singly. But it will become me best to pass over in silence what has been already so ably described by the pen of Gibbon.*

The amphitheatre was converted into a hospital by the brethren of the *Sancta Sanctorum* Company, at the end of the fourteenth century; and as their arms are still visible, painted on the ruined arcades of the southern side, the Roman antiquaries infer that this part must have been destroyed before that time, though there is no previous record of its spoliation. To me the proof does not seem quite so conclusive, because the Colosseum was the acknowledged property of these brethren, even in the commencement of the seventeenth century; and therefore it is by no means clear, that the arms we now see were painted in the fourteenth.

* Vide Gibbon's Decline and Fall, last Chapter, containing an interesting account of the Colosseum, and of the remains of ancient Rome.

The "indignant Poggius" laments, that in the fifteenth century, the principal part of its stones had been burnt to lime; but surely this must refer to the interior coating, which was of marble; for Tiburtine stone would scarcely be used for such a purpose.*

During the sixteenth century, it seems to have been first turned into a quarry. All the noble Romans, Guelphs and Ghibellines, friends and foes, all parties and factions, agreed on one thing—to pull down the walls of the Colosseum whenever they wanted stones. By common consent, they made a written compact for this laudable purpose; and the Abbé Barthelemy, the accurate and enlightened author of Anacharsis, mentions that this curious document was among the archives of Rome.†

It is related in many old books, and the tradition is confirmed by many old men, that Cardinal Farnese, a nephew of Paul III., obtained, after much importunity, a fretful permission from his uncle to take away the stones from this magnificent building for *twelve hours* only; and that, profiting by the license, he let loose an army of 4,000 workmen to assail its walls. It may be imagined the effects of the work of this day!

Facts, however, are so difficult to ascertain in Rome, from the total disregard to truth prevalent here—I am sorry to say, among all classes—that I cannot answer for this statement. But it is most certain, that, whatever might have been the chariness of the said Pontiff, when he restricted its demolition to twelve hours, it was remorselessly pulled down during his pontificate; and it is at that period (the sixteenth century) that its ruin may be dated.‡ It was then that the immense bulk of the

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* The large blocks of Tiburtine stone, of which the Colosseum is built, are too valuable in a city which is twenty miles from a quarry, to be used for lime. This scarcity of building materials in Rome, has been one great cause of the destruction of ancient edifices. Leading the stones for St. Peter's cost more than the whole expense of building St. Paul's. Neither canals, rail-ways, nor even Macadamization, facilitated the passage from the Travertine quarries, near Tivoli, to Rome, a distance which must be about sixteen or eighteen miles, over extremely bad and rugged roads.

† Gibbon's Decline and Fall, last Chapter, p. 377. It has never since been seen.

‡ The Theatre of Marcellus also served as one of the quarries of this princely and palace-building family.

Venetian and Farnese Palaces, the Cancellaria, the Palatine Summer-houses, and one half of the buildings of Rome, were erected with its materials. I could forgive Michael Angelo the frightfulness of these Farnese structures, but never the source from which he took the stones. It seems as if the sacrilege he committed upon the glorious works of past ages cast a spell over his own; for the architecture of the buildings he raised is as little honourable to his genius, as the spoliation of the Colosseum to his taste.

In the seventeenth century, Sixtus V. attempted to establish a woollen manufactory here, but fortunately the project failed. The sanctification of its remains, about the middle of the last century, by Benedict XIV., in late remembrance of the blood of the blessed martyrs who were sacrificed here, alone saved it from utter destruction.

Yet, even after it was declared holy, and sacred to the memory of these blessed martyrs, the lowest corridor was converted into a receptacle of dung for the purpose of making saltpetre, in which state it remained till the French came and cleansed this Augean stable. There was a little hermitage, with its chapel, for several centuries, in the Colosseum, and it never failed to be inhabited by a hermit, till the French came and shot him; —properly enough, indeed, if it be true that he had been guilty of robbery and murder.

I gave the Pope considerable credit when I came to Rome and found workmen employed in carrying away the rubbish of this old den; but, alas! it only made way for a new one, in which a gray-bearded Capuchin now sits, who, I suppose, acts at present the part of hermit, and who begs most pertinaciously for the support of the Virgin, and the holy souls in purgatory, modestly never mentioning himself.

Endless have been the discussions as to the pavement of the Arena, or whether it had any pavement at all. Some of the learned maintain it was covered with wood, and had moveable lids, or trap-doors, through which the wild beasts sprung up from below, like the ghosts in a play. Others say, the wild beasts walked in at the sides,

like regular actors, and that the Arena was paved with marble.

The fact is, I believe, that whatever the permanent flooring might be, it was uniformly covered, during the games, with sand, or saw-dust, (as, indeed, its name implies,) to receive the blood of the dead and wounded men and beasts, and prevent the ground from becoming slippery with gore.

The sand was frequently covered with vermilion, in order that the stains of blood might not shock the sight of the spectators.

It is a disputed point, whether or not the ancient Arena was on the same level as the present. Several of the Roman antiquaries maintain, that it was formerly ten feet lower; and, although they must all have seen its very substructions when they were laid bare by the French, they have not yet been able to settle the point among themselves.

There is a vaulted subterraneous passage recently discovered, which terminates at the Arena, and the roof of which is exactly below the level of its present surface; but, as it has evidently led to it, I conclude it must have been upon the same level, and that the ancient one was exactly as much below the present, as the height of this passage, which is not very great. It is called the private passage of the emperors. If so, it certainly was not a very magnificent one. It is now, as it always must have been, low and dark; for its stuccoed ceiling and mosaic pavement still remain. It leads, too, in a direct line south, from the south side of the Colosseum, while the Imperial Palace lies to the north-west. "But," say the antiquaries, "though it *seems* to go in a contrary direction, it *must* have taken a bend round to the palace." It may be so; but it seems a singular contrivance to make the emperors describe a large circle, when they could have come in a straight line; and more especially as the way is so dismal, that it could not have been done for the pleasure of the walk.

For my part, I suspect this pretended private passage of the emperors to have been the passage of the wild beasts. The nature of the animals, indeed, was so simi-

lar, that the mistake is little more than in name; but it is certain that the passage in question leads directly in a line towards their dens—I mean the wild beasts—and therefore I cannot help suspecting it to have been made for their accommodation. Some of these dens are still to be seen below the Convent of St. John and St. Paul, on the Cœlian Mount, in a building called by the absurd name of the *Curia Hostilia;* but (for a miracle) all the antiquaries seem agreed that it was a *Vivarium* for keeping the beasts before their exhibition in the Colosseum. I saw last winter one of the iron rings to which they had been fastened, but I lately sought for it in vain. It has, however, been seen by many eyes besides mine; and this circumstance alone would be sufficient to prove the destination of the building, if it admitted of doubt. It is manifestly of the same date, and built of the same materials, as the Colosseum, which it resembles so exactly, that one might suppose a portion of the Arcades had been conveyed up the hill. It is supposed to have been built by Domitian. The grand *Vivarium* was near the Porta Maggiore; but its distance would render another necessary near the Colosseum, for the wild beasts to be kept in before they were brought out; as it would not be easy to bring down every lion as it was wanted from the other end of the town. But though there seems little reason to doubt that this was a Vivarium, I think it but fair to inform you, that the communication between it and the Colosseum, by means of the low vaulted passage, is merely my own opinion, and therefore, perhaps, not entitled to much credit.

The holes which disfigure the exterior of the Colosseum, in the part that remains perfect, have excited much speculation. They are evidently not the effects of chance or time, but of design and laborious execution; but why they were made, it is not so easy to discover. The common opinion is, that it was to get at the cramps that fastened the stones together; and to give this notion some shadow of probability, it has been supposed that these cramps were of bronze. But we can scarcely believe that the Romans would use a very costly metal, comparatively unfit for their purpose, when a very cheap

one was well adapted to it. Bronze would scarcely hold stone walls together; iron might. The cramps, therefore, if any there were, must have been of iron. But in no part of the wall that has been laid open, is there any appearance of cramps, or of the holes they must have made. Granting, however, there were such things; surely it must have cost less trouble to have made a piece of iron, (and in no age was that art forgotten,) than to have undergone the incredible labour of boring through those solid blocks of stone, to get at such little bits of it. It once occurred to me that these might be the holes in which the poles were fixed that supported the *Velaria*, or awning of the Amphitheatre; but they could only have been at the top of the building, and these are in all parts. There were also holes for pipes, from which descended showers of perfumes; but these holes are too large and too irregular for that purpose. The more probable account of the matter is, that these holes were made for the poles that supported the booths of the artisans, who crowded these corridors with their temporary shops during the fairs held here.* If that won't do, is it not possible that the holes may have been made during the long course of years that the Colosseum was a fortress, and attacked and defended with all the fury of civil combat? Or if this does not satisfy you, perhaps they were made at the period that the people of Rome had a mania for searching old ruins for hidden treasures,—in one of which paroxysms, they broke into the little arch of Septimius Severus, in the Forum Boarium, and did an infinite deal of mischief in the way of pulling down old walls, and ransacked every imaginable place in the unprofitable search. But if all, or none of these causes will content you, then I must refer you to the elaborate and erudite treatise written by an ancient bishop, in folio, on all the possible and impossible causes of these holes:—the aspect of which profound work was so appalling to me, that I can give no other account of it than its dimensions; but I think the task

* Gibbon's Decline and Fall, last Chapter. Donatus Roma Vetus, &c.

of reading it through will prove a sufficient atonement, if not cure, for your incredulity.

On the outside of the Colosseum, are the crumbling remains of a building supposed to have been the *Meta Sudans*, that famous fountain, which existed even in Republican times ;* and after having been destroyed by Nero, and restored by Domitian,† continued, during many ages, to refresh, with its fast falling waters, the thirsty combatants in the games of the Amphitheatre.‡

We have now finished the survey of this stupendous edifice. Since it was erected, what changes have covered the earth! New arts, new institutions, new languages, and new religions, have sprung up ; new worlds have been discovered, and new nations have advanced to civilization, and sunk into decay ; and yet the Colosseum stands in its ruins unrivalled and alone.

But, all beautiful as it is, we must ever regard it with mingled admiration and horror. It is laid in everlasting ruin, like the gigantic power that raised it. What eye, in that proud day of its dedication, when the Roman sway extended over every part of the known world, from the confines of India, and the deserts of Africa, to utmost Thule—what eye could then have foreseen the future fall of that building meant for eternity—of that empire that grasped at infinity! And yet may we not, in our retrospective glance, trace the destroyer of both, in those very vices which this proud fabric was destined to foster?

Certainly, if the characters of nations may be estimated from their favourite sports, that of the Romans must bear the stain of the blackest cruelty. No nation, in ancient or modern times, has revelled with the same savage avidity in human blood. This horrible passion did not appear in its full force till after the final fall of the Republic. Virtue and liberty vanished together. Unmitigated des-

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* Seneca, Ep. 57. † Cassiodorus, Chron. Dom. ix.

‡ There is a fountain, supposed to be the Meta Sudans, sculptured in bass relief, between two lions, on a marble tomb, (in the shape of a large tub,) which stands in the first gallery of the Vatican, after passing the Gallery of Inscriptions, on the right-hand side. It is supposed to have been called *Meta*, from its resemblance to the form of the Meta of a Circus. The water descends from the top, into a basin.

potism, unparalleled cruelty, unnatural depravity, unimagined vices, and unpunished crimes, rapidly increased with the appetite for those inhuman diversions, which have left a foul blot upon our nature.

The passion for these detestable sports is indeed a curious chapter of the history of the human mind, and one which might furnish important materials to the philosopher. It does not appear to be the reproach of one people, or the barbarous taste of one age, acquired from some peculiar bias, or derived from imitation; but, unnatural as it seems, it was the delight of all the nations of antiquity; and to this very day the same sports are practised in the remote Indian islands, whose sequestered inhabitants never heard of the Roman name. The Javanese have games in which tigers fight with other wild beasts, and with condemned criminals.*

Nor need we go so far for examples—the bull-fights in Spain, and in modern Rome itself,—perhaps, too, the bull-baitings and cock-fights† in England, are still food for the same passion, and conclusive proofs of its existence, although no longer gorged with human blood.

For Christianity was reserved the signal triumph over this long indulged, most cherished, and fiercest passion of the soul. The games of the Amphitheatre were for ever abolished by Honorius. They had, indeed, been prohibited by Constantine, but never discontinued. "Several hundred, perhaps several thousand victims, continued to be annually slaughtered in the great cities of the Empire; and the month of December, more peculiarly devoted to the combats of gladiators, still exhibited to the eyes of the Roman people a grateful spectacle of blood and cruelty."‡ They were represented for the last time in presence of the timorous Honorius and his protector Stilicho, when

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*I asserted this upon the information of a friend who had been in Java; and, since my return to England, I have found this fact confirmed in Raffle's History of the Island.

† Cock-fighting, that barbarous but classical diversion, was practised both by the ancient Greeks and Romans. Partridges and quails were also made to fight in the same manner as cocks. Vide Archæologia, vol. iii. p. 132.

‡ Decline and Fall, vol. v. p. 91.

Rome celebrated a humiliating triumph, not for her conquests over, but her escape from, barbarians. But the abolition of the games was not so much the effect of the piety of the Emperor, as of the self-devoted virtue of an humble individual. Telemachus, an Asiatic Monk, inspired by the divine spirit of the religion he professed, having ineffectually tried remonstrance, descended into the Arena to separate the gladiators. and sank beneath a shower of stones hurled upon him by the enraged people. Yet the sacrifice was not made in vain. Honorius, from that day, for ever abolished the combats of gladiators, and the Christian Romans submitted without a murmur, and even reverenced as a saint him whom their blind fury had immolated. But it is well observed by Gibbon, "that no church has been raised, nor shrine dedicated, to the only martyr who ever died in the cause of humanity."*

LETTER XXIX.

ANCIENT THERMÆ—VESTIGES OF THE BATHS OF AGRIPPA AND CONSTANTINE, OF THE PRETENDED BATHS OF PAULUS ÆMILIUS, AND OF THE BATHS OF SANTA HELENA.—THE THERMÆ OF CARACALLA.—PISCINA PUBLICA.

The less that is known about any thing, the more may be said. Volumes without end have been written on the subject of the Baths or Thermæ of the ancients, and nobody is any wiser;—at least, I can answer for myself. I found indeed that the contradictory assertions, and irreconcilable hypotheses, contained in these elaborate treatises, only tended to make "confusion worse confounded;" and that the more I studied, the less I knew. I

* Decline and Fall, vol. v. p. 190.

consulted the professed antiquaries: but what one told me, was contradicted by another; and the newly admitted belief of yesterday was chased out of my understanding by the later imbibed ideas of to-day. I applied in my perplexity to a learned friend, who has passed most of his life in Rome. He gave me all the information in his power; but candidly owned, that, after a long and diligent examination of the remains of the ancient Thermæ, he had never been able to form any accurate idea of their plan; so that what he could not comprehend after twenty years of study, I need not pretend to explain after a two years' residence in Rome.

I have often wished, in my dilemma about all and each of the ruins of Rome, that I could "call up some spirit from the mighty dead," to conduct me through them, remove my doubts, and answer my inquiries. What a *Cicerone* would an old Roman make! Not that I would recall a Cicero to a world unworthy of him, to fill the ignoble office which is so impudently dignified by his name; or disturb the stoic shades of a Scipio, a Brutus, or a Cato, to escort an inquisitive young barbarian like me over the scenes once consecrated by their presence. Their republican souls would know no more than we do of the remains of imperial luxury that now cover the city of the Seven Hills. Some Roman of the more degenerate days of empire I would choose for my guide: and, if I thought "he would come when I did call on him," I would invoke the shade of the younger Pliny; and get him, among other things, to explain the plan of the Thermæ.

We need no ghost certainly to tell us that the use of baths was to bathe in; but these baths had many other uses besides. They were designed to unite every mode of recreation. They had spacious halls for social assemblies,—courts and theatres for athletic sports,—shady porticos for the recitation of poets and the lectures of philosophers,—"and all things for all men." In short, they were to the Romans something like what our coffee-rooms and news-rooms are to the English; only that they had neither newspapers nor coffee,—that the sole refreshment was water, taken externally, instead of punch

or negus internally; and that they had philosophical instead of political disputes.*

But neither coffee-houses, nor any institutions of modern days, bear any real similitude to them. We have no buildings to compare them to,—no habits to refer them to; they were suited to a different age, people, climate, and state of society; and among all the dubious and perplexing antiquities of Rome, none certainly are so dubious and perplexing as the remains of these Thermæ. Even Vitruvius gives us no light here; for although the Thermæ of Agrippa must have been built in his time, he describes only the private baths of the Romans, which, however luxurious, bear no analogy whatever to these public Thermæ.

An ancient author† tells us, that in the proud days of Roman empire, the Thermæ were like whole provinces—(*in modum Provinciarum*;)—and Pliny gives a splendid description of the sculptures and paintings, the magnificent seats of solid silver,‡ the silver pipes and baths,§ the polished vases, the pavements of precious stones,‖ and all the sumptuous decorations, that filled these gigantic establishments of pleasure.

Their magnitude and magnificence, indeed, are sufficiently attested by their mighty ruins, which, even after the dilapidations of ages of barbarism, still stand, incontestable monuments of the grandeur, the luxury, and the idleness of the Romans.

But whatever might have been the predilection of the ancient Romans for bathing, we must acquit the moderns of that, and of every other species of luxury which bears the most remote affinity to cleanliness. Pliny, in his minute and interesting description of his Laurentinum Villa,¶ tells us, that, besides his own private baths, the neighbouring village contained no less than three public baths,

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* The Romans, however, had their newspapers as well as ourselves, though it is not recorded that they were taken in here; and among all the lost treasures of classic literature, there are few that would prove so interesting and instructive as a complete set of the *Diurna Populi Romani*.

† Ammian. Marcell. lib. xvi.
‡ Pliny, lib. xxxiii. cap. 12.
§ Statius.
‖ Seneca, Epist. 86.
¶ Pliny, Ep. xvii.

which were sufficiently elegant and commodious, for the use of his guests. And besides all the Thermæ, the public baths of the city, and many other public baths, Panvinius enumerates no less than 754 private baths in his survey of Rome. But Rome has not now a single public bath : and private baths rarely, if ever, form a part even of the spacious and costly palaces of the nobility. Excepting some, on a very confined scale, belonging to one of the hotels, and almost exclusively frequented by foreigners, there are no baths in Rome.

I have often regretted that some of the numerous fountains, whose waste of waters so delightfully embellishes Rome, were not used for this purpose ; and perhaps if the Popes had built fewer churches and more baths, it would have been better for the bodies of their subjects, and not worse for their souls.

But I have somehow made a transition from ancient to modern Rome—and it is high time to return from these visionary baths of her Popes, to the ruined Thermæ of her Emperors.

Of the long list of Thermæ that adorned imperial Rome, the ruins of those of Titus, of Caracalla, and of Diocletian, are all that now remain ; except that the Rotonda of the Pantheon, and the broken Arco della Ciambella behind it, may be considered as vestiges of the Baths of Agrippa ; and the ruins in the Colonna Gardens, of those of Constantine,—the first and the last Thermæ that ever were erected in Rome.

Some remains of the Forum of Trajan, indeed, are vulgarly called the Baths of Paulus Emilius, although we have no reason to believe that he ever made any baths at all ; nor, as they were luxuries wholly unknown to the Republic, is it at all probable he ever did. Indeed we may be sure, that had he built any thing so extraordinary, Plutarch, who records the Basilica of his erection, would not have omitted to have mentioned it. Juvenal indeed alludes to the Baths of Paulus ;* but it does not follow that

* Ut forte rogatus
Dum petit aut Thermas aut Balnea Pauli, &c. *Juvenal.*

there never was, at any period, any other Paulus than Paulus Emilius.

There are some inconsiderable vestiges of the Baths of the Empress Helena, in the grounds of the Villa Massimi, on the Esquiline Hill. A few low broken fragments of brick wall might belong to any thing, but an inscription was found there which attested their identity.*

Some uninteresting ruins of a Roman date, in a vineyard between the Aventine and the Tiber, (the entrance to which is through a red wooden gate on the right of the road going towards the Porta San Paolo,) are called, on conjecture, the Baths of Decius; although it seems more probable that the baths of that Emperor were upon the Aventine Hill.†

But these are inconsiderable and unintelligible remains, scarcely worth notice. Even the ruins of the three principal Thermæ, immense as is their extent, have evidently formed but a small part of their ancient magnitude. The ingenuity of antiquaries has formed, from their confused remains, a variety of fanciful and conjectural plans; but as they are all at variance with each other,—like the four genuine and original portraits of Shakspeare, which bear between them no shade of resemblance,—we may be allowed to doubt if any of them be the true one.

They all seem to have consisted of an external part, the lower story of which was dark, subterranean, lighted by lamps, and contained the whole range of the hot-baths. It surrounded the internal part, from which it was generally divided by an open space, filled with shady walks, or gardens, a Gymnasium, and sometimes with a sort of Stadium for running foot-races.

The internal part—which, in the baths of Diocletian and Caracalla, had no subterranean story,—consisted entirely of places for recreation—covered porticos for walking, sheltered from the sun and rain; courts and theatres for active sports; libraries for study, and apartments for

* It is now placed above the porphyry Sarcophagus of that Empress, in the Sala della Croce Greca, in the Vatican.

† Vide Nardini, Roma Antica. Aventino.

idling. There was generally, at least, one great covered hall, or *Pinacotheca*, in every Thermæ, supposed to be devoted to this last laudable purpose, though, according to some authorities, it was used as a *Xystum*, or place for wrestling, in bad weather, as well as for a great lounging-room.

One of these great covered halls (that of the baths of Diocletian) is still entire, and is now converted into a church ; but of this I shall speak in our visit to these ruins.

The remains of the Thermæ of Caracalla, to which we must first direct our steps, consist entirely of the upper story, and of the internal part ; which internal part, as I before observed, never, in these baths, had any subterranean story. There is now no access into the subterranean story of the external part, and, indeed, no appearance of it in either of these Thermæ ; but it is said, excavations have frequently been made into both.

The Baths of Caracalla are situated at the base of the most southern of the heights of the Aventine, on the Via Appia, remote from the actual extent of the modern city, though within the circuit of its walls.

They now present an immense mass of frowning and roofless ruins abandoned to decay ; and their fallen grandeur, their almost immeasurable extent,—the tremendous fragments of broken wall that fill them,—the wild weeds and brambles which shade them,—their solitude and their silence ; the magnificence they once displayed, and the desolation they now exhibit,—are powerfully calculated to affect the imagination.

We passed through a long succession of immense halls, open to the sky, whose pavements of costly marbles and rich mosaics, long since torn away, have been supplied by the soft green turf, that forms a carpet more in unison with their deserted state. The wind, sighing through the branches of the aged trees that have taken root in them without rivalling their loftiness, was the only sound we heard ; and the bird of prey, which burst through the thick ivy of the broken wall far above us, was the only living object we beheld.

These immense halls formed a part of the internal di-

vision of the Thermæ, which was entirely devoted to purposes of amusement.

The first of these halls, or rather walled enclosures, you enter, and several of the others, have evidently been open in the centre. They were surrounded by covered porticos, supported by immense columns of granite, which have long since been carried away, chiefly by the Popes, and Princes of the Farnese family. In consequence of their loss, the roofs fell with a concussion so tremendous, that it is said to have been felt even in Rome, like the distant shock of an earthquake. Fragments of this vaulted roof are still hanging at the corners of the portico. The open part in the centre was probably destined for athletic sports.

One of the halls, the famous *Cella Solearis*, which could not have been less than 150 feet in length, and held 160 marble seats, was entirely covered with a flat roof of stone, which was considered a miracle of architecture. It is supposed to have been supported by flat crossing bands of metal, forming a thick chequer work; and, from their resemblance to the *solea*, or straps used to bind the sandals round the feet and ancles, the hall was denominated *Cella Solearis*. This astonishing work is said to have been executed by Egyptian artists.

Many have been the doubts and disputes among antiquaries, which of these halls has the best claim to be considered as this once wonderful *Cella Solearis*. All are roofless now; but the most eastern of them, that which is furthest to the left on entering, and which has evidently had windows, seems generally to enjoy the reputation.

Besides these enormous halls, there are, on the western side of these ruins, the remains of a rotundo, or large circular building, and a great number of smaller divisions, of all sizes and forms, in their purpose wholly incomprehensible. We may suppose them to have been places in which the learned harangued their disciples, philosophers held their controversies, and poets recited their verses; or, since ancient Rome was by no means exclusively populated with these exalted minds—in which mere ordinary souls used to talk and amuse themselves. Such, too, would seek the *Spheristia*, or tennis courts, or

places for playing at ball; an amusement, indeed, which we know the sternest* of philosophers and censors—even the elder Cato himself—did not disdain to practise.

In fact, no satisfactory idea can be formed from the remains we see, of the peculiar destination of any particular parts, and imagination at last desists, fatigued with the ineffectual attempt to picture what they were. Excepting that they belonged to that part of the Thermæ destined for purposes of amusement, nothing can now be known; and, though the immense extent of the baths may be traced far from hence by their wide-spreading ruins, it is equally difficult and unprofitable to explore them any farther.

In the last of these halls there is a deep draw-well; and in one of our many visits to these ruins, we found a young Englishman of our acquaintance, who, in his ardour for antiquities, was on the point of descending in the bucket to the bottom of it. This was carrying the maxim of seeking "truth at the bottom of a well" rather too literally into execution, but he was so sure that he should make some wonderful discovery there, that we could not succeed in stopping him, till we called in the testimony of the old woman who opens the door, in corroboration of our own, to prove that the well was not *antico*, but made for the use of the pigs that now revel undisturbed in all the luxuries of these imperial halls.

Splendid as they were, perhaps in ancient times, as in the present, they were often filled with the swinish multitude.

A broken staircase leads up to the top of the ruins, but it is in so dilapidated a state, that the ascent has become extremely perilous.

This immense interior is supposed to have been surrounded with an external part, of course still more immense, forming a subterranean oblong square, which, besides the baths containing the *Exedræ*, or buildings for the slaves who attended the baths, the police who regulated, and the soldiers who guarded them.

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* Plutarch's Life.

The Thermæ consisted of every possible modification and auxiliary of bathing that luxury could devise. First, there was an *Apoditerium*, or great undressing-room,—a *Sudatorium*, *Laconicum*, or vapour-bath,—a *Caldarium*, or hot-bath,—a *Tepidarium*, or tepid-bath,—a *Frigidarium*, or cold-bath,—and an *Unctuarium*, or room for perfuming and anointing the body with oil ; and through the whole process of these baths and anointings it is pretended that each bather generally passed. There was, besides, a large open *natatio*, or swimming-bath, the only one which enjoyed the light of heaven, all the rest being perfectly dark.

The water was heated by means of a large *hypocaustum*, or stove.

A bell was rung at a stated hour in the evening, to signify that the water was warm and the baths ready.* Those who used them at any other hour could have cold water only.

It appears that the two sexes usually bathed together, although the practice was prohibited by Hadrian, Marcus Aurelius, and several of the Emperors. Even the dissolute Agrippina, the mother of Nero, was so much scandalized at the practice, that she built baths expressly for the use of women on the Viminal Hill.

Above this outer square of the baths, there is supposed to have been a terrace, or gallery, from whence the spectators could view, as from a theatre, the sports and diversions in the *Palæstrum*, or *Gymnasium*, the walks, (Ambulacra,) &c. &c., which filled the intermediate open space between them and the interior building.

I had understood that the whole outer subterranean story, in which were the range of baths, was buried under ground, and no remains of it to be seen ; and great was my delight to find several small apartments with no light but what broke in at the door, and containing what, in my innocence, I took to be baths full of cold pellucid water. Never doubting that this was a *frigidarium*, I

* To this Martial alludes :—
Redde pilam—sonat æs thermarum ; ludere pergis ?
Martial, l. xiv. Ep. 163.

hastened to impart my satisfaction to an antiquary of our party, who nearly went distracted at this most heterodox idea. He declared, with much discomposure, that *the water was modern*, and that the receptacles containing this modern water—which he would upon no account allow to be denominated baths, though we could devise no other name for them—were modern also; and that the buildings—were not modern, but had been places for the guards, slaves, officers,—for any thing, or any body, but baths and bathers.

If I had had any idea it would have irritated him so much, I never would have mentioned it, for he did not recover his temper during the rest of the day, and still continued to repeat to himself at intervals, "*L'acqua è moderna.*"

The Baths of Antoninus Caracalla were finished by Heliogabalus and by Alexander Severus, whose name they sometimes have borne.

It is surprising to me that the antiquaries have never begun to dispute whether these Thermæ may not be those of Commodus, who did build baths on the Via Appia, though their site is unknown. At all events, the name of *Thermæ Antonivianæ*, by which these are distinguished, would suit either Emperor equally well.

The beautiful statues which now adorn Naples, the Farnesian Bull, the Hercules, the Flora, and the Callypygian Venus, were found here. Caracalla pillaged Hadrian's villa to adorn his baths, and probably these masterpieces of sculpture had been taken from thence.

The *Piscina Publica* is supposed to have been in this neighbourhood. Its name implies that it was a public reservoir of water. It is heard of at a very early period of Roman history, and is generally believed (by the antiquaries) to have been used for the purpose of swimming in. Yet, while they tell you this, with their usual consistency they assure you, that, till the time of Augustus, the Romans had no other bath than the Tiber.

LETTER XXX.

THE THERMÆ OF TITUS—HOUSE OF MECÆNAS—ANCIENT PAINTINGS—ARABESQUES—RAPHAEL—LAOCOON—CHURCH OF S. S. MARTINO E SYLVESTRO—POUSSIN'S PAINTINGS—SUBTERRANEAN CHURCH—MASSES AND MARTYRDOMS OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS—CARMELITE MONKS—SETTE SALLE.

THE antiquaries, for the most part, seem agreed that the Thermæ of Titus differed from those of Caracalla and Diocletian, in having a subterranean story beneath its internal part, which contained the baths, and which, instead of being built like the others, in the form of an oblong square, was oval or circular, and that the ruins which remain are of this part.

To me, I own, it seems somewhat doubtful whether these baths ever had any external part—for which I can find no space—or were built according to the same plan as the later ones; or even whether there was any distinction of public and private baths in them, as is pretended; for Suetonius expressly tells us, that "Titus admitted the common people into *his* baths, even when he used them himself;"* and Panvinius, in his Survey, enumerates no other baths than those of Titus, in Region III. of Rome. Be this as it may, it is certain that the Baths of Titus, though open to the public, were attached to his own palace, some vestiges of which, or possibly of the upper story of the baths, are still pointed out in a vineyard above the *Palombara*, or gunpowder manufactory. They consist of a broken section of a high semicircular brick wall, with two rows of large niches, one above another; but what particular purpose the building, of which we see this fragment, may have served in the days of Titus, it would require considerable hardihood now even to hazard a conjecture.

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* Suet. Titus, 8.

The Thermæ and Palace of Titus were built with the ruins, and on the site of the wide-spreading buildings and pleasure-grounds of Nero's Golden Palace; and they extend from the base of the Esquiline Hill, near the Colosseum, to one of its summits at the churches of S. S. Martino e Sylvestro, and to another at S. Pietro in Vincoli.

That part of these interesting ruins which has been excavated is near the Colosseum. We passed the mouths of nine long corridors, as the Italians call them—not that this is a very appropriate term (though I cannot find a better) for long passages converging together like the radii of the segment of a circle, divided from each other by dead walls, covered at the top, and closed at the end. They must always have been dark. They are *supposed* to have been entrances to the baths, and they are *supposed* to have served as substructions to the theatre above, which is *supposed* to have formed a part of the upper story, of which not a trace remains; and the whole of these suppositions have their source in the inflammable imaginations of Roman antiquaries. Nothing is certain about them, excepting that they are not worth looking at. In one of them are piled up various pieces of broken amphoræ, terra cotta, marbles of various kinds, and other heterogeneous fragments found in the late excavations by the French, among which were some pots of colours. They were analyzed, but nothing new was discovered, and we are still as ignorant as ever as to the cause of the brilliancy and durability of the hues of ancient painting.

Having passed these corridors, we entered the portal of what is called the House of Mecænas, a name so justly dear to every admirer of taste and literature, that we did not feel disposed too scrupulously to question the grounds of the belief, that we actually stood within the walls of that classic habitation, where Horace and Virgil, and Ovid and Augustus,* must have so often met. In fact, this cannot now admit of any very demonstrative proof; but it is known that the House and Gardens of Mecænas stood in this part of the Esquiline Hill, which,

* Augustus, when indisposed, used to take up his abode in the house of Mecænas. Suet. Aug. 72.

before it was given to him by Augustus, was the charnel ground of the common people;* that the conflagration of Nero's reign† did not reach to them; and whether spared from convenience, or from respect to the memory of that great patron of arts and literature, it is believed a part of them was taken by Nero into his buildings, and by Titus into his baths.‡ Antiquaries think they can trace a difference in the brick-work and style of building, between what they consider the erection of Augustus's and of Titus's age; and on these grounds, the parts they point out to you as vestiges of the House of Mecænas, are, the entrance I have already named, which leads into a range of square roofless chambers, (christened, on supposition, the Public Baths,) and the wall on the right, in passing through them, which is partially formed of reticulated building in patches.

From these real or imaginary classic remains, we entered a damp and dark corridor, the ceiling of which is still adorned with some of the most beautiful specimens that now remain of the paintings of antiquity. Their colouring is fast fading away, and their very outline, I should fear, must be obliterated at no very distant period, so extreme is the humidity of the place, and so incessantly does the water-drop fall. By the light of a few trembling tapers elevated on the top of a long bending cane, we saw, at least twenty feet above our heads, paintings in arabesque, executed with a grace, a freedom, a correctness of design, and a masterly command of pencil, that awakened our highest admiration, in spite of all the disadvantages under which they were viewed. Insensible of the penetrating damps and chilling cold, we continued to stretch our necks with admiring the Faun, the Nymph, the Bacchante, the Mercury, the Loves and Graces, the twining flowers and fantastic groupes of gay

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* Horace, lib. i. Ode 8.

† Tacitus, lib. xv. cap. 39, mentions, that the flames were extinguished at the base of the Esquiline Hill.

‡ *Antea sepulcra erant in loco in quo sunt Horti Mæcenatis ubi sunt modo Thermæ.*—Acron. Nardini contests, I think without any just rounds, the authenticity of the above passage.

imagery, which the classic imagination of the Roman painter had assembled seventeen centuries ago.

To Raphael these exquisite figures were a school of art. He transfused much of their soul and spirit into his own compositions, but made no slavish copy of them. The senseless assertion made by the malignity of those who wish to degrade lofty genius to the level of their own grovelling minds, that Raphael sought to conceal these masterpieces of ancient art, by causing the excavations to be filled up, and tried to pass off this style of painting as his own, I should have thought too contemptible for notice, but for your observations on the subject.

Not a shadow of proof can be brought in support of the calumny, but there is abundant evidence of its falsehood. For, besides that arabesques are described by Vitruvius, whose works were in the hands of Raphael, as well as of every other architect of his day, and that it can scarcely be supposed he would lay claim to the invention when the whole body of his rivals could prove its antiquity; and besides that the corridors of Hadrian's villa, painted in arabesque, have been open to public inspection even from the days of that emperor; every one who has any acquaintance with the history of art must be aware, that these identical arabesques were never concealed, never filled up—but were openly studied, as well by Raphael's scholars and contemporaries as by himself. To take at random the first instance of their notoriety that occurs to my memory, Benvenuto Cellini, in his Memoirs, casually alludes to these paintings in Titus's Baths as universally known, and as the avowed source from which Raphael had taken the idea of the designs with which he had recently adorned the Vatican. A thousand other instances might be adduced, if it could be necessary to confute what has not a shadow of proof.

A moral confutation, not less convincing, I need scarcely mention, that a being possessed of the generous spirit, the great mind, and the high conscious powers of unequalled genius of Raphael, could not be guilty of an act of such mean littleness and shameful disingenuousness.

There seems to be something in the works of the ancients, in their poetry, their eloquence, their sculpture,

their architecture, and even in that most fragile of the fine arts, their painting, that was imperishable in its nature. Raphael's arabesques in the Vatican have suffered nearly as much in three centuries as these have done in seventeen.

I have been accused of valuing them on account of their antiquity, and it is true. That antiquity has an unspeakable charm for me; and I own, I admire them not only because they are beautiful, but because they are ancient.

How often, as I have gazed upon the exquisite arabesques of these ruins, or on the paintings taken from the walls of Pompeii, with increasing interest and admiration—has the sense of their unimpaired outline, their brilliancy and harmony of colouring, and the long succession of ages that have rolled away since those living forms and tints were hastily impressed on the wall—given me a delight that no production of yesterday, however perfect, could have awakened!

Of their merit, distinct from such feelings, I am not, perhaps, an unprejudiced or a competent judge. But the truth, the freedom, the correctness of design, the exquisite grace of attitude, and the felicity of fancy that breathe from every specimen of the paintings of the ancients, must charm every eye,—and are such as might be expected from the perfection of their sculpture, and the purity of their taste.

The few designs of landscapes I have seen, however —one of which was excavated before my eyes in a house at Pompeii—are strangely inferior to their historical paintings, and are, in fact, beneath criticism; total violation of the laws of perspective, whether proceeding from ignorance or inattention, having produced total failure. They are scarcely one degree elevated above the drawing on a china plate.

But we ought, in estimating the merits of ancient painting, to remember, that the specimens of it we possess are probably not of the first order. Arabesques, that covered an immense extent of rooms and passages, ought rather to be regarded as intended collectively for general ornamental effect, than as productions of individual excellence.

Arabesque paintings, we know, were designed as architectural or finishing decorations, and, as such, were condemned by Vitruvius ; and, even if we should admit the violent improbability, that the greatest masters of the art had exerted their skill in embellishing the humble dwellings of a distant sea-port like Pompeii, or the acres of buildings that composed the Thermæ of Titus, it is impossible that, on the small scale and restricted plan of this class of paintings, their great powers should appear to advantage. What should we have thought of Raphael, had he left behind him nothing but his arabesques? How do they fade before the immortal frescoes of his Camere ?

These very frescoes may be cited as a proof, that, as the greatest masters of modern times did not disdain to embellish the walls of a papal palace, the first among the ancients would exert their skill to decorate the Thermæ of a Roman emperor. But the immense extent of the Baths of Titus, and the shortness of the period in which they were finished,* are conclusive proofs that they could not have been solely executed by the labours of one or two of superior genius. A multitude of artists must have been employed ; and that the works of no pre-eminent master have escaped in the few relics which remain, I argue from the general equality that runs through the whole.

The finest painting that has been found in the Baths of Titus, is the famous *Nozze Aldobrandini.*† Its classic beauty of design, composition, and expression, which were adequate to form the genius of a Poussin, do not require my feeble praise. Yet one other painting, which still remains in the corridor of these baths, representing a group of figures, designed with exquisite skill; and many of those taken from Herculaneum and Pompeii, are of scarcely inferior excellence ; and I therefore con-

* Suetonius particularly mentions the remarkable expedition with which they were built.

† So called, from the Aldobrandini Gallery, to which it originally belonged. It is now to be seen at the house of Signore Nelli, 152 Corso. It is supposed to represent the marriage of Peleus and Thetis. The figure of the Muse, who is singing the Epithalamium, is singularly beautiful.

clude, that they are all the work of artists of mediocrity —that they prove a certain degree of perfection in the art, and a correct knowledge of its most important principles, to have been very generally diffused—and that the best works of the first masters must have been of very high superiority ; for, if an undistinguished artist painted these, what must have been the perfection of the works of an Apelles or a Zeuxis ?

There are, however, two capital defects observable in all the specimens of ancient painting which have come down to our time. First, the faults in perspective—all the figures, like a basso relievo painted, being represented, as it were, on the same plain; and, secondly, the want of lights, and the consequent absence of all the effects of light and shadow, and all the magic of *chiaro oscuro*, on the scientific management of which so much of the effect of modern painting depends.

We must suppose these principles of the art to have been unknown, even to the greatest artists, otherwise some marks of them would be visible, even in the works of the meanest ; and yet, if I remember right, Vitruvius, in his seventh book, mentions a treatise on perspective, written by Anaxagoras and—somebody else.

The Romans, in the fine arts, were only the pupils and copyists of the Greeks ; and to the last, the latter preserved their superiority over the enslavers of their country.

But this long disquisition on ancient painting must have been insupportably wearisome to you, and it is certainly doubly hard to hear so much of it when you can see nothing.

Leaving the painted corridor of the Baths of Titus, which is adorned with these beautiful specimens of ancient art, we entered halls, which, like it, must always have been dark,* but are still magnificent. The bright

* This corridor has had a glimmering artificial ray of borrowed light from the upper story, admitted through square apertures in the painted ceiling, which were probably covered with a grate. I suspect, however, that they were merely intended for the purpose of ventilation, since the feeble ray that entered here could scarcely serve even to render "darkness visible."

colouring of the crimson stucco, the alcove still adorned with gilding, and the ceilings beautifully painted with fantastic designs, still remain in many parts of them; but how chill, how damp, how desolate, are now these gloomy halls of imperial luxury! No sound is to be heard through them but that of the slow water-drop. Certainly the ideas of pleasure in different ages have been of very opposite descriptions. Who would, at this day, from choice, bury themselves in subterranean dungeons, or exchange all the splendour of the sun, the free air and common sky, for the red and dusky glare of stifling torches? Yet, what is now considered a punishment too great even for criminals, was then the chosen enjoyment of luxurious Romans; and the poorest inhabitant of Britain would not exchange his cheerful cottage, for the dark magnificence of the imperial palace of the Master of the World.

Yet, the uniform temperature obtained by the exclusion of light and air, the coolness in summer, and warmth in winter, may have sufficiently compensated for the want of those blessings; and, indeed, we ought to remember, that as the Baths were chiefly frequented at night, the admission of light, as in our theatres, was unnecessary, and they may have had means of ventilation which we cannot now trace. We are certainly wholly inadequate judges of what the Thermæ were in their days of splendour; but as they appear to us now, they offer little adapted to modern ideas of enjoyment.

In one of the splendid dungeons of Titus's Baths—thirty-six of which have now been opened—we saw the remains of a bath, supposed to have been for the private use of the Emperor. In another we were shown the crimson-painted alcove where the Laocoon was found.*

* Nardini says it was found in a vineyard near the Palombara, but Winkelman exposes his mistake, and proves that it was discovered in this precise spot. Its discovery is recorded on the tomb of its discoverer, in the Church of Ara Cœli, as "his praise in death." It appears, therefore, that this part of the ruins belonged to the Palace of Titus, in which Pliny tells us it stood in his time. It is satisfactory to have a new proof that this is the identical masterpiece of Grecian sculpture which he extolled. Yet, though answering in style, in age, in perfection, and even in its exact local situation to that description, it has, by the unaccountable

It was discovered in the time of Leo the Tenth, at which period the rubbish which filled these baths was so thoroughly sifted, that I should fear there is little probability that any such prize remains to reward the labours of future adventurers. The French, who cleared out a great many of these chambers, found nothing but the Pluto and Cerberus, now in the Capitol, a work of very indifferent sculpture.

Still, as it is well known that the finest statues were placed in the Baths, either because they were the favourite retreats of imperial luxury and pleasure, or because they appeared to most advantage by the light of torches, the only ray that penetrated their darkness; and as, if report say true, whole miles of ancient Thermæ remain unexplored, many hidden treasures of sculpture may yet be discovered.

On leaving these ruins, we observed, close to the reputed house of Mecænas, some broken-down brick walls, and a most hideous washed-out Madonna, which belonged to a church or chapel that once stood here.

From hence we went to the Church of S. S. Martino and Sylvestro, which is also built on the ruins of the Baths of Titus, though at least half a mile from the part we had been examining.

The interior of this church struck me as one of the most chaste and beautiful in Rome. The platform and tribune, where the high altar is raised above the Confession, or Tomb of the Saints, surrounded by the richest pavement of inlaid marbles, have a most striking effect. The naves are formed by a double range of ancient columns of beautiful marble. But these spoils of ancient Rome are treated like the victims on the bed of Procrustes. If too long, they are cut down,—if too short, they are extended; and these having been in the latter predicament, are stuck on pedestals of the most dwarfish disproportion; and pedestals, even when formed *selon les règles*, I always entertained a most anti-Palladian aversion to. This I cannot allow to be a proof of want of taste,

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perversity of some antiquaries, been pronounced a copy, not the original; an opinion which seems to me so wholly unsupported by probability or evidence, that I shall not stop to notice it.

since I find, to my great satisfaction, no pedestals used in any of the ancient buildings of Greece or Rome; and Palladio, with all his churches and palaces, will never rival the Pantheon or the Parthenon. To solitary pillars, of course, pedestals are indispensable; but in buildings, how beautiful it is to see the glorious unity of the colonnade springing from the earth, and not propped up on stilts!

The most attractive sight in the church, to us, was a series of landscapes by Gasper Poussin, painted whilst he took refuge in this convent from the plague which depopulated Rome. They are unquestionably beautiful compositions, but rapidly executed, with no depth, no effect, apparently done before his genius had reached maturity.

Our examination of them was interrupted by the arrival of a lay-brother, with tapers and keys, to guide us to the crypt below the church, which anciently formed a part of the Baths of Titus, and is said to have been converted into a place of worship by St. Sylvester I. during the persecutions against the Christians.

Under his auspices also, the first General Council was held in this dismal dungeon, after the conversion of Constantine.

There was something in the deep obscurity and unbroken silence of the place that impressed a feeling of awe and melancholy on the mind. We stood before the plain and simple altar of the early Christians, where the incense of prayer and supplication had been offered up in solemn secrecy. We dimly saw around us the forgotten tombs of princes and abbots mouldering in obscurity. The flickering glare of the taper fell on the discoloured red hat of a Cardinal, suspended above his monument, and dropping into dust, like the bones of him that slept below. "Vanity of vanities," it seemed to say, "all is vanity."

We trod on a fragment of the ancient black and white Mosaic pavement of the Thermæ of Titus; and mingled, as it was, with that of later ages, it recalled to us the time when this flinty floor, "that holy knees had worn," had resounded to the tread of the proud masters of the world. As we ranged through these damp and silent chambers, which, after being the alternate scene of imperial luxury, and of humble piety, were now abandoned to the repose of

the dead—the voices of the Carmelite monks in the choir above, chanting the evening service, reached our ear through these echoing vaults, in a full and prolonged swell. These solemn sounds of praise, thus raised to God by the unseeing inhabitants of the cloister—men who had voluntarily abjured the hopes and pleasures of life to devote themselves to heaven—breathed the sublime spirit of devotion; and, joined to the deep gloom of the place,—its wide extent, its remote antiquity,—and the tombs of the dead dimly visible around us,—touched our hearts with emotions not born of this world. Under their influence we lingered till the strain ceased; we returned to the upper church; the spell of feeling was broken, and Reason resumed her empire.

She immediately began to make her inquiries; and being, like most of her sex, a lady of an inquisitive turn, begged to know how it happened that old St. Sylvester, or any other Saint, chose one of the Thermæ, the most public places in Rome, and the most frequented by the idle and dissolute Pagans, to perform the forbidden rites, and hold the secret meetings of the early Christians?

Nor could it, she said, be pretended that these Thermæ were deserted at that period, (the end of the third century,) when even the Christians were rebuked for resorting to them even in the sixth.

Moreover, she was confounded by the sight of long lists of martyrdoms, which, if the legend and its date be true, must have happened in the reign of Constantine; and she asked, if the Christians were tortured by the very same Emperor who established Christianity?

But Reason in vain proposed her questions and remarks. She got no satisfaction from the monks. They continued in the same tone to assert, that, in "*tempi antichi*," St. Sylvester, and all the rest of the Christians, were persecuted, and had their church here; that in "*tempi antichi*" these were Titus's Baths; in "*tempi antichi*" the first Council was held here under Constantine; and in *tempi antichi*" the Saints were martyred here; but all times past and events were jumbled by them into one general "*tempi antichi*."

It was impossible to make them attend to dates or cir-

cumstances, to observe their own contradictions, or allow the most notorious facts of history. They paused with a stupid gaze of astonishment; and, for all reply, began again with "*tempi antichi.*"

But, even with this cogent argument, nothing they could say of the merits and miracles of St. Sylvester—nor even the sight of the very chair he had sat in—nor his picture on the wall—nor the relics of the martyrs—nor the instruments of their martyrdom—consisting of heavy Roman weights, said to have been suspended round their Christian necks—nor the recital of all the tortures they underwent, with these most uncomfortable necklaces,—nor anything else,—could convince me, that, before the establishment of Christianity, old St. Sylvester was such a fool as to say mass in the Baths of Titus, or that the Romans were civil enough to allow him: or that after it, this long string of saints were put to death for being Christians.

I did not leave the Church of the Saints Martin and Sylvester without forming a fervent wish that the monks of this convent, and of every other in Rome, were enjoined, by way of a wholesome penance for the good of their souls—and bodies,—to dig for a certain number of hours every day at the ruins of Rome; which, besides being a great advantage to themselves, might bring to light unsuspected treasures of art. While speculating upon this, and all the other clever things I would do if I were Pope, we arrived at the *Sette Salle*, a ruin which stands in another part of the Esquiline Hill, in a lonely vineyard near the *Palombara*, and those remains of the upper story of the *Thermæ*, or Palace of Titus, that I mentioned before.

These seven halls are better than they promise, for they proved to be nine, and an equal number, it is said, are beneath them, which make eighteen. They have evidently been immense reservoirs of water, not only for the use of the Baths of Titus, which could not require so enormous a supply, but likewise to fill at pleasure the immense arena of the Collosseum, which was occasionally used for a Naumachia,* as well as an Amphitheatre. If

* Domitian, as well as Titus, exhibited a grand naval fight in the Amphitheatre, besides several engagements in the Naumachia which he built

a doubt could remain of their destination, which their form and structure sufficiently explain, it might be observed, that the tartareous deposite, which has penetrated the stucco,—the same that is found in the channels of many of the aqueducts, and to this day is left in the bed of Anio, —is a decisive proof that these buildings must have contained water. It is precisely similar to the substance found on the walls of the great reservoir,—the *Piscina Mirabile* at Baiæ,—and, like that, polishes into a sort of marble.

These halls communicate with each other by means of four apertures in each of the division walls, so placed as to intersect them diagonally; so that standing at the most remote, you see the long diagonal line of the whole of the nine halls in beautiful perspective.

I forgot to say, that Trajan finished or enlarged the Baths of Titus, in consequence of which they have been called *Thermæ Trajanæ;* and they were afterwards repaired and embellished by Hadrian, and have also borne his name.

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near the Tiber, between fleets almost as numerous as those in real battles. Suet. Dom. 4.

LETTER XXXI.

THERMÆ OF DIOCLETIAN—ROTONDA, OR CHURCH OF S. BENARDO—GYMNASTIC THEATRE—GREAT COVERED HALL OF THE BATHS, OR CHURCH OF THE CARTHUSIANS—DOMENICHINO'S FRESCO OF ST. SEBASTIAN—TOMB OF SALVATOR ROSA, AND CARLO MARATTI—BIANCHINI'S MERIDIAN—CARTHUSIAN MONKS—VILLA MASSIMI—BIBLIOTHECA ULPIA—THE EIGHTY THOUSAND MARTYRS—DIOCLETIAN—THERMÆ OF CONSTANTINE—RUIN OF THE THERMÆ.

We drove this morning to the Baths of Diocletian, which are scattered over the summit of the Quirinal and Viminal Hill, and which, in extent, as well as splendour, are said to have surpassed all the Thermæ of Ancient Rome.

Though they do not stand in the same imposing loneliness of situation as those of Caracalla, the wide space of vacant and grass-grown ground over which their ruins may be traced, tells a melancholy tale of departed magnificence.

The Thermæ of Diocletian were finished by Maximian. They have, apparently, been built in the form of an immense oblong square, with a circular hall, according to some accounts, at all the four corners, but more probably at two only, and these are still standing. One of them, which is much dilapidated, has been converted into a granary; and the other owes its preservation to the piety of an old countess, who, some centuries back, transformed it into the Church of San Bernardo, and endowed the convent to which it belongs.

It has been said by some antiquaries, that this hall was anciently a *Caldarium*, or *Tepidarium*. I would by no means presume to contradict anything they say, but, in this instance, they contradict themselves; for if, as they pretend, *all* the baths were always in the subterranean story, then these halls could not have been baths, because

they were in the upper. Setting this aside, if, by a Caldarium, or Tepidarium, it is meant that each of these lofty halls was a sort of huge cauldron, or great bath, in which the people bathed sociably all together, with a little water at the bottom, and a great air-hole at the top,—where, I would ask, were the means of heating or filling them? One of them is in perfect preservation, and yet no tubes, channels, or other conveyance for water, such as we see in the ruins of all ancient baths, have ever been found in the walls or the pavement—in the roof above, or the earth beneath them. If we are to suppose that they were filled with a variety of little baths, the difficulty is still the same,—how were they filled or heated?

If, however, they were not baths, I see still less reason to imagine that they were temples, which they have been sometimes called. They bear no appearance of ever having had that indispensable part of temples—a portico; nor can I find any authority for the belief—now, I think, nearly exploded—that any of the *Thermæ* ever contained temples; or see, in any part of their wide-spread ruins, the vestiges of any building bearing any resemblance to them.

It seems most probable, that the circular halls in question were neither baths nor temples, but belonged to that part of the Thermæ which was devoted to purposes of amusement, though what may have been their peculiar destination, it would be vain now to inquire.

Into that ancient hall, which now serves the worthy purpose of a granary, we could get no admittance; but the other, the Church of St. Bernard, into which we at last effected an entrance, is really a noble building, and the light pouring in through the top of the lofty dome, accorded well with the stillness and silence that reigned through it, and with the figure of the only human being it contained—an old monk, who was kneeling before the altar of his patron saint. Perhaps he was imploring the image to grant him patience, for we had disturbed him from his siesta to admit us,—having come to the gate while the holy fathers were indulging, as usual, in a comfortable nap after the labours of their noonday repast,—and long and loudly had we rung, before we succeeded in awakening

this one unwilling monk—for a monk he was; I had affronted him extremely, by taking him for a lay-brother.

We asked him to show us some remains of the baths, which are still to be seen in the garden of his convent; but neither entreaty, importunity, nor bribery, could prevail on him to let us see them; none of the female sex, it seems, being ever admitted among their cabbages.

Our despair, however, at this refusal, was afterwards ameliorated, when we found another entrance into an adjoining garden, opposite the Church of Santa Maria degli Angeli, which equally gave us access to the ruins we wished to see.

This garden evidently occupies the arena of a Gymnasium, Palæstra, or some theatre, which, from its form and structure, must have served for pentathlic games. It is surrounded by a semicircular portico, the central part of which has apparently been the seat, or *Suggestus*, of the Emperor. By the monks, it has been converted into a small Oratorio, or chapel, but it is now falling into ruin. In another part of this portico, an humble, but decent dwelling has been formed, the mistress of which invited us to enter, and accepted our acknowledgments with the "*Padrone!*" and the peculiarly winning smile and gesture with which the Roman females pronounce this courteous word. Having ascended her narrow staircase, we walked along the raised terrace of this portico, but saw nothing to admire except the orange trees, whose mingled flowers and fruit were flourishing within it.

The *Xystum*, *Pinacotheca*, or great covered hall of the Thermæ, which seems to have stood in the centre, was converted into the Church of Santa Maria degli Angeli, by M. A. Buonarotti, but it has been considerably altered, and perhaps not for the better, by succeeding architects. The entrance to it is now at the side instead of the end, through a circular vestibule, lighted from the top, and similar in form to the Church of San Bernardo. After all the changes that have been made, however, this noble hall retains much of its original form and beauty. Perhaps, indeed, it owes its grandeur of effect as well to magnitude as to design, and I will not deny that its architecture may be chargeable with heaviness; but although

it was built at a period when the arts, and their parent taste, had greatly declined from their full perfection, it is one of the most perfect and beautiful remains of antiquity that Rome can boast, and one which it is impossible to behold without admiration.

You stand in a hall three hundred and fifty feet in length, and ninety in height, the uniformity of the form of which is varied by the circular hall of entrance opening to it in the centre of one side, and a deep recess, or rather oblong chamber, on the other, in which stands the high altar.

The vaulted roof, still studded with the metallic circles to which the lamps were suspended, is supported by sixteen noble Corinthian columns, eight of which only are ancient, and are of Egyptian granite; the rest are painted so ingeniously in imitation of them, that, at a little distance, to the eye they produce complete uniformity. The proportion of the columns, as well as of the hall, was injured by raising the pavement above the ancient level, which was done by Michael Angelo, to guard against the humidity of the ground. Would it not have been better to have dug it out to a sufficient depth?

This noble church is adorned with a variety of paintings, none of which, however, excited my admiration, except the martyrdom of St. Sebastian, in fresco, by Domenichino, originally painted in St. Peter's, where the mosaic copy now supplies its place, and afterwards brought here. The composition is too crowded and confused, but every figure is a study that might form a painter. It is marked throughout with the boldness of conception, the force, the originality, the nature and the pathos of his vigorous and expressive pencil. The dying resignation of the suffering saint—the agonizing despair of his friends—the hardened indifference of the brutal executioners—above all, the beauty and smiling innocence of the children, hanging by their affrighted mother, contrasted with the dark ferocity of the Roman commanders, are indeed worthy of that lofty genius which bowed only to the supremacy of Raphael.

Who can turn from this to the feebleness of Carlo Maratti, on the opposite wall!

Not only the work, but the tomb of that artist, stands in this church, and we contemplated it with the respect due to merit, which, however inferior to that which had gone before, at least surpassed any that has since visited the world. The Monument of Salvator Rosa, opposite, awakened far deeper interest; and the inscription, which reminded us, that genius, whose early promise was prematurely blighted and cut off by dark and unresisted passions, slept below—drew a sigh from many a bosom that gathered round to view it.

On the pavement of this church, a meridian was traced in the year 1701, by Bianchini, the antiquary. I followed its sloping line with great show of wisdom, looked up at the solar ray which enters through a small puncture in the roof, and was perfectly satisfied that it might be one of the most perfect meridians that ever was traced; but it is equally certain, that if it had been one of the worst, I never should have found it out; for the fact is, I know nothing of the matter. If, however, you should wish for a full and particular account of this meridian, I should suppose you would find it in a folio description of it published in Rome, the dimensions of which were the only part I examined.

This church belongs to the *Certosa*, or Convent of Carthusians, who are of the same order as the Chartreuse, excepting that their rules are less rigid in Italy than in France. We seem destined to-day to disturb the peace of Cloisters; for having been informed that some remains of the Thermæ were enclosed within the court of the Convent; and knowing by experience the inefficacy of solicitations for admittance, we walked through the forbidden gate-way, and proceeded straight onwards to the objects of our curiosity, taking care not to hear the warning voice of a monk, who pursued us as fast as was consistent with his dignity, calling to us, in a voice of horror, to stop. In a rage at finding us deaf to his cries, he had recourse to the great Convent bell, on which he rung so loud an alarum, that the whole community ran out in the utmost consternation. They despatched one of their body in solemn deputation, to represent to us the enormity of our offence; but not even his threats of excommunication in

this world, and something worse in the next, had any effect upon our hardened souls. To please them, however, we finished as quickly as possible our survey of the ruins which had been the sole cause of our irruption here, (and which seemed to have formed part of a portico,) and assuring him we had no evil intention upon the good fathers, and had not so much as the least wish to see them—but that, since they had chosen to take up their abode among the ruins of Rome, they must lay their account with having occasional visits from ladies, who had come from the other extremity of Europe to view them—we took our departure, and quietness was restored within the Convent. They took care to shut the gates behind us; verifying the proverb, of barring the stable-door when the steed is stolen.

Thus, these halls, that were built for Pagan indulgence, are now converted into the scene of monastic austerity. The monks of St. Bernard, and the Carthusians, divide between them the ruins of the splendid Thermæ of Diocletian, for its sole remains are comprehended in the two churches,* the granary, and the ruined theatre, already mentioned, in their garden.

There are, indeed, some other inconsiderable scattered vestiges: One day, in wandering about these ruins, I came to a building, once perhaps a magnificent hall, but now the miserable dwelling of a muleteer, whose large family of mules and children were all comfortably accommodated together beneath its lofty roof.

The Villa Massimi, and its spacious gardens, occupy a part of the site of these Thermæ; it is in the state of reckless neglect, dirt, and disrepair, so common in Italian houses, and is wholly unfurnished and abandoned. It once possessed a valuable collection of ancient statues and bass reliefs, and even of Roman paintings, found in the excavations made here; but I understand they passed into the possession of the late Lord Bristol, so well known for his eccentricity and passion for the arts.

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* The famous Hermaphrodite was found behind the Church of St. Maria de' Angeli, in the grounds of these Carthusians.

The *Bibliotheca Ulpia* was brought to these *Thermæ* by Diocletian, from the Forum of Trajan. Above three thousand *bagnaruole*, as the Italians call them, or bathing vessels, (*Lavacra*,) each hewn out of one immense block of the most costly Grecian marble, or Oriental granite, adorned these baths. Some of them are preserved in the museum of the Vatican.

I cannot quit the churches which now occupy the site and the ruins of the Thermæ of Diocletian, without observing that the memory of the forty or eighty thousand martyrs, who, as varying monkish legends credibly inform us, were massacred at these Baths in recompense for having built them, is still held in deserved veneration here. It seems strange, however, that more respect was not paid to their labours by the sacrilegious Pope, who pulled down a considerable part of the buildings thus sanctified with their blood.

It may seem somewhat improbable that the mild, the enlightened, the philosophic Emperor, whose name they bear, should, in the short and single visit* he ever paid to Rome, amuse himself with the deliberate massacre of either forty or eighty thousand of his subjects. The enormous amount, as well as contradictory statement of the numbers, is an ample refutation of a preposterous accusation, unsupported by any admissible evidence. But while we acquit him of such exterminating barbarity, we are compelled to acknowledge, that, however little consonant to his character, the stain of persecution is indelibly affixed to the memory of Diocletian. When, after a reign of twenty-one years of glory and of virtue, he entered Rome, for the first time, to share with his imperial colleague the *last* proud triumph Rome was ever destined to witness,—when, even in that proud moment, he meditated the abdication of the purple, and needed not the whisper of the monitor† to remember "he was only a

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* Vide Gibbon. He only staid two months.

† An attendant was always stationed behind the victor in the triumphal car, to repeat to him, as the proud procession moved along, "Remember thou art a man!" In republican times, at least, such was the custom; I do not remember whether it was afterwards preserved, or

man ;" the fiery mandate to extirpate Christianity and Christians, was already gone abroad, and for ten succeeding years, that unfortunate sect was pursued with inflexible hostility.

But when a slave, a peasant, and a shepherd,* sat in conjunction on the throne of the Cæsars, the opprobrium must at least be divided ; and the implacable hostility of his colleagues and successors towards that unfortunate sect, would seem to prove, that the long years of perfect toleration they had enjoyed during the whole of his preceding reign, might be more certainly imputed to his mildness and moderation, than the edict of persecution which disgraced its close, to his cruelty. That mandate was extorted by the long-continued importunity, perhaps misrepresentation, of his colleagues, from a body enfeebled by disease, and a mind harassed with the cares and vexations of empire.

From the works of the persecutor, we must turn to those of the protector of Christianity—from Diocletian to Constantine. Both built baths ; but, with all my passion for antiquities, I could never find much satisfaction in groping among the old battered brick walls in the Colonna Gardens, which constitute the sole remains of the Thermæ of the latter Emperor. An antiquary, who in an evil hour once laid hold of me in this place, demonstrated to me, with much learning and length, that these

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whether truth was allowed to be whispered into an imperial ear. So, in the moment of his exaltation to the chair of St. Peter, the herald, even now, lights the smoking flax, and, as it consumes away, exclaims to the spiritual monarch of the world, the earthly king of kings, " *Sancte Pater ! Sic transit gloria mundi.*"

* Diocletian, Maximian, and Galerius. Diocletian was the son of a Dalmatian slave ; Maximian, a Pannonian peasant, who served as a common soldier ; Galerius, a Dacian shepherd, or cow-herd. Galerius, however, (like Constantius Chlorus, who was then employed in subduing Carausius, the Roman usurper, in Britain,) was Cæsar only, not Emperor ; but his influence was thought to have been chiefly instrumental in first causing the persecution against the Christians, and carrying it on after the abdication of Diocletian, when Maximian had elevated him and the mild and merciful Constantius to supreme power. So foreign was persecution to the nature of Constantius, that, on his death-bed, at York, he recommended the Christians to the special protection of his son and successor, by whom their faith was soon afterwards established.

aforesaid Thermæ differed from every other in having had three stories—which I was quite willing to believe, in order to get away from him. I moreover saw an ugly piece of coarse mosaic; and I did *not* see sixteen ancient paintings taken from these Baths, and formerly in the Palazza Rospigliosi, but which are there no longer. I also heard a great deal about the two Collossal Groupes of Castor and Pollux, now on Monte Cavallo, which were found here, and of which I suspect you have heard enough, or too much, already.*

We have now finished our hasty survey of the few vestiges that remain of the magnificent *Thermæ* of Ancient Rome. All that was valuable—all that was splendid in them—has been long since torn away by the rapacity of foreign and domestic plunderers. Their gold, their silver, their ivory, and their bronze, might be carried off by the Goth or the Vandal; but their marble columns were dragged away, their mosaic pavements torn up, their embossed and gilded roofs broken down, and their very brick walls destroyed by the worst of barbarians—the modern Romans. These walls, broken as they are, now constitute their sole ruins. From them we can form no idea of what they once were, and the glories of the Thermæ are but feebly remembered, even in the dull detail of historical description.

It would be vain to go through the long and unprofitable catalogue of all the splendid Thermæ which adorned Ancient Rome, when their very walls, which have served as quarries, have long since been exhausted, and even their site has become dubious.

In the fourth century, they are known to have stood in all their original magnificence; and their destruction does not seem to have commenced for nearly two hundred years afterwards. The early Christians discouraged their disciples from frequenting these baths—not, as a cynical friend of mine observed, because the Catholic predilection for dirt existed even in the days of the fathers—but because they were places of licentiousness and immorality:

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* Vide Letter XIX.

a charge which we have every reason to believe was true, in its fullest extent.

They were not, however, deserted, until the destruction of the Aqueducts, by Vitiges, or Totila, in the sixth century, had deprived them of their element of life; when, like a body without a soul, they decayed away.

LETTER XXXII.

BRIDGES—THE ANCIENT AND MODERN BRIDGES OF ROME—BRIDGES OVER THE ANIO—PONTE LAMENTANO—THE SACRED MOUNT, AND THE TWO RETREATS OF THE ROMAN PEOPLE TO IT—MENENIUS AGRIPPA—VILLA OF PHAONTES, THE SCENE OF THE DEATH OF NERO—PONTE SALARIO—COMBAT OF TORQUATUS WITH THE GAUL—HANNIBAL'S CAMP—BRIDGES OF ANCIENT ROME, OF ENGLAND, &c.

The first, and for a long time the only bridge of Rome, was the *Pons Sublicius*—or Æmilius, as it was afterwards called—built, as its name signifies, of wood, and erected, as Livy informs us, by Ancus Martius. It was here that Horatius Cocles performed those prodigies of valour, which, as that ingenious historian observes, "are more easily admired than credited by posterity."*

This bridge was afterwards rebuilt, without nails, to facilitate its destruction, in case of the recurrence of any such exigency. It does not appear to have been made of any more solid material than wood, till the time of the emperors, when Antoninus Pius built it of marble. One solitary fragment of a broken pier, or fallen arch, now lies in the Tiber, between the Aventine and the Ripa

* Livy, lib. xxxvi. cap. 15.

Grande, and serves to mark its ancient situation. It is visible only when the water is low.

Annually on the 15th of May, in the times of the kings, men were thrown from this bridge into the Tiber, and images made of rushes or of clay, were afterwards substituted for them by Junius Brutus.

In later times, the mangled bodies of Commodus and Heliogabalus were ignominiously hurled from it.

This bridge was the great station of the beggars, who used to sit there asking charity.*

The Palatine bridge, (*Pons Palatinus*,) or, as some of the antiquaries have christened it, Pons Senatorius, (though there never was any such bridge,) at present called the Broken Bridge, (Ponte Rotto,) and in truth no bridge at all, for there is nothing left of it—was the first bridge of stone that was erected at Rome. It was finished by Scipio Africanus and L. Mummius, in their Censorship; the piers had been previously built by two former Censors.†

It was rebuilt for the last time by Gregory the Thirteenth, and finally destroyed in the flood of 1598.

From the spot where it once crossed the Tiber, the embouchure of the Cloaca Maxima is visible, when the water is low, in the bank a little lower down the river.

The branch of the Tiber leading to the *Isola Sacra*, now the Island of St. Bartholomew, was crossed by the *Pons Fabricius*, so called from an Ædile of that name, who originally built it in the year of Rome 733, as the still legible inscription upon it proves. It is mentioned by Horace, as if the scene of a meditated suicide.‡ This bridge is at present called Ponte di Quattro Capi, from the little Hermes, with four faces, set up upon it in modern times.

The other branch of the Tiber between the Island and Trastevere, was crossed by the *Pons Cestius*, so called, undoubtedly, from the name of its original founder, though who he was is not very clear. It is now called the Ponte di San Bartolomeo, and bears an inscrip-

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* Seneca, Ep. xxv. † Livy lib. xl. cap. 51. ‡ Hor. lib. ii. Sat. 3.

tion, which states that it was rebuilt by the Emperors Valentinian, Valens, and Gratian, in A. D. 375, whence it was once called the Gratian Bridge.

Both these bridges, which connect the island with the banks of the river, were originally built in the eighth century of Rome.

The original date of the erection of the *Pons Janiculensis*, I believe, is not ascertained, but there are no remains of it. The Ponte Sisto, built by Sixtus IV., occupies its ancient situation.

A vestige of the *Pons Triumphalis*, or what is generally reputed such, is still visible in the Tiber, opposite the hospital of the Spirito Santo. The date of its erection is unknown. The victorious Consuls to whom the Senate decreed the honour of a triumph, crossed this bridge, followed by their soldiers, their captives, their trophies, and their spoils; entered the Campus Martius by the *Porta Triumphalis;* passed the Circus of Flora, the Circus Flaminius, the Theatres of Pompey and Marcellus, the Portico of Octavia, and the Circus Maximus; traversed the course of the *Via Triumphalis*, which terminated at the base of the Palatine near the arch of Constantine, and entered the *Via Sacra;* passed between the Colosseum and the Temple of Venus and Rome, in front of the Temple of Peace and the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina; and crossing the Roman Forum, ascended to the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus.

Scipio, Marius, Sylla, Pompey, Cæsar, Cicero, Augustus, Claudius, Trajan, Aurelius, Severus,—how many names of infamy or glory might we not recapitulate of those who have passed here, in the short-lived triumph of man over his fellow-creatures!

The *Pons Ælius*, so called from Ælius Hadrianus, by whom it was built as a passage to his magnificent tomb, is now transformed into the Ponte San Angelo. The piers and arches are ancient, but have been a good deal repaired; not indeed till it was necessary, for in the pontificate of Clement VII., when crowds were pressing forward to St. Peter's, to share in the benefits and indulgences offered to the pious there, the bridge gave way, and a hundred and seventy-two people perished in the Tiber.

Clement IX. repaired it more thoroughly, and to him and Bernini are due the merit of all the saints and angels that are fluttering upon it.

These six bridges of ancient Rome (for I count the two which connect the island with the opposite shores of the Tiber as one) are now reduced to three. These are,

1st. The bridges of the Island.

2d. The Ponte Sisto; and,

3d. The Ponte San Angelo.

Out of Rome there is only one bridge over the Tiber. It is the Milvian or Æmilian bridge, built by M. Æmilius Scaurus in the seventh century of the Republic, on the Via Flaminia, about two miles from the Porta del Popolo. The present bridge of six arches was rebuilt by Nicholas Fifth nearly on the foundations of the Roman one. Its name is now corrupted into Ponte Molle.

It is famous as the scene of the eventful battle in which Constantine defeated Maxentius, and the previous apparition of the fiery cross in the heavens, in the faith of which he conquered, and which announced his own approaching triumph, and that of Christianity.

That it was really the spot where the battle was fought, is matter of historical fact.

It was here, too, that the ambassadors of the Allobroges were overtaken on their return to their own country by the vigilance of Cicero, when the treasonable despatches with which they were charged, furnished proof of the conspiracy of Catiline.

It was here, too, in the dissolute times of the empire, that the Roman youth resorted for the purposes of midnight revelry and debauch; and here, in the pursuit of these illicit pleasures, the monster Nero once narrowly escaped assassination,* by returning through the gardens of Sallust.

The Anio, now the Teverone, which flows into the Tiber, is crossed at the distance of a few miles from Rome, by three bridges, all of them the work of the low

* Vide Tacitus. Ann. lib. xiii. cap. 47. Suetonius. Ner.

ages; excepting perhaps the *Ponte Mammolo*, a name supposed to have been a corruption from Mammea, the mother of Alexander Severus, by whom it is reputed to have been built. It is about four miles from Rome, on the road to Tivoli.

The *Ponte Lamentano*, formerly the *Pons Nomentanus*, is about three miles from Rome, on the Via Nomentana, which led to the ancient city of that name, as now to the miserable village that occupies its site. It was rebuilt by Narses, having been destroyed in the unceasing conflicts of that bloody period. In the bridge itself there is nothing remarkable; but beyond it rises the broad green height of *Monte Sagro*, as it is still called—that very *Mons Sacer* to which the Roman army and people retired from the city when oppressed by the tyranny and exactions of the Patricians, and from whence the rough eloquence of Menenius Agrippa, and his ingenious apologue of the Body and the Members, induced them to return, on being allowed to have magistrates of their own—tribunes of the people, to guard their rights.

They retired to it a second time, when driven into resistance by the tyranny of the Decemvirs, after the murder of Virginia by her father; and then only required of the Senate, that the Decemvirs should lay down their illegal authority, that the tribunes of the people should be restored, and that full immunity should be granted to themselves; demands so moderate, that the deputies of the Senate heard them with admiration, and declaring that they were such as they should themselves have offered, immediately conceded them.*

It is something to feel we stand upon the sacred spot where this scene of Roman firmness, and almost philosophical moderation was twice exhibited,—where an army, flushed with recent conquest, and a people, irritated by long continued oppression, calmly demanded that redress of their wrongs, and security for their liberties, which the

* Venuti asserts, that the second secession of the people to Mons Sacer was terminated by the establishment of Plebeian Ædiles. But this was not a stipulation at the time they laid down their arms, although the office was soon after created.

most dispassionate umpire must have awarded them, and, guided by the light of reason, asked for justice, and no more.

Fortunately, for once, no doubt intrudes itself on the consciousness that we do indeed stand on this spot. The site of the Monte Sagro seems ascertained beyond the cavils of criticism. Livy mentions, that it was three miles from the city, on the other side of the Anio;* and Dionysius Halicarnassus describes it even more particularly, so that we ascended it in the unwavering faith, that the earth we trod was "holy ground."

The hill that exclusively bears the name of Monte Sagro, is on the right of the road, though that on the opposite side seems also to form a part of it.

A ruined sepulchre stands at the foot of the hill on either side of the road. That on the left, which is larger and in better preservation than the other, is called the tomb of Menenius Agrippa; but this is vague supposition. We know that he died in honourable poverty, and that the expenses of his funeral were defrayed by a voluntary assessment of the people.† But history is silent as to the place of his interment.

About a mile farther on this road, a little to the left, from the description of historians, *must* have been the villa of Phaontes, Nero's Freedman, where that monster fled to seek that refuge which the world, so lately his own could no longer afford him, and where he killed himself, to escape the more cruel and ignominious death that was overtaking him.‡

The *Ponte Salario*, which also crosses the Anio, about three miles beyond the gate of the same name, is a very singular and picturesque structure. Upon its centre is erected a high tower of defence, beneath which the road passes, and a small staircase at the side leads up to it. The inscriptions upon it record, that having been destroy-

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* Trans Anionem amnem tria ab Urbe millia passuum. Lib. ii. cap. 32.

† Livy, lib. ii. cap. 32.

‡ Suetonius says, Nero fled by the Via Numentana to the villa of Phaontes, which was between that road and the Via Salara, and about four miles from Rome.

ed by Totila, it was rebuilt by Narses, and it has apparently stood uninjured from that day.

But its interest takes its rise from an early period of history. On the formidable invasion of the Gauls, when their threatening hosts had advanced even here, and Rome trembled at the impending horrors of a second pillage, this bridge was the scene of the desperate combat fought between the intrepid Manlius and the gigantic Gaul, which terminated in the defeat of the Barbarian, and delivered the Romans from the paralysing dread of their arms, by showing they were not invincible; for, previous to this, their very name had struck every Roman heart with terror. You must know I have discovered that this great Gaul was dressed in tartan, like our Highlanders; for Livy says, he wore *versicolori veste*, which I can translate by nothing else: and this being the case, you will, I hope, henceforward, have a proper reverence for the high antiquity of the plaid. Well may we look down from our mountains with contempt upon broad cloth and duffle!

But, to return to the combat between this great Gaul and Manlius, at the end of which "the soldiers," says Livy, "burst forth into extempore songs in praise of his valour—(these extempore songs, by the way, look extremely as if the art of the modern *improvisatori* was of high antiquity in Italy)—and hailed him *Torquatus*, from the *torquis*, or gold chain or collar, with which his redoubtable antagonist was decorated, a name which he and his descendants ever afterwards bore.*

It is very singular that a hero of the same name and family should twice save Rome from the same barbarians; for Manlius Capitolinus was the ancestor of Manlius Torquatus. He was the same Manlius Torquatus who gave such a signal instance of filial duty to his father, and of parental severity to his son. The cruelty of his father towards him had been such as to rouse the indignation of the whole Roman people; and he had been consequently cited to answer before them for these unheard of acts of

* Livy, lib. vii. cap. 10.

barbarity; but young Manlius, who well knew, from the hatred universally felt against him, that his condemnation was certain—surprising his accuser in a secret place, drew his sword upon him, and compelled him to take a solemn oath never to bring forward the charges against his father; and thus left himself without means of redress from his tyranny.*

This indeed was virtue, sublime as it is rare, and worthy to be held in everlasting remembrance; but his conduct to his own son, though dictated by false notions of virtue, can only excite our abhorrence. For no fault but that of disobedience to a general order he had issued to his army not to leave the ranks, he condemned his noble minded son,—who, like himself, had sprung forward to accept the bravadoing challenge of one of the enemy, and gained a glorious victory,—to be beheaded on the spot, and sat unmoved to witness the cruel execution.

Such unnatural virtues are even more revolting than natural vices, and no human heart can ever sincerely applaud them.

But to return to the *Ponte Salario;*—I think we may conclude, that the ground on the other side of it is that on which Hannibal encamped during the few days he remained before Rome; for though Livy does not mention this bridge, he says the Carthaginian pitched his camp on the Anio, three miles from Rome, and advanced to the Porta Collina, now Salaria, which he would naturally do from hence.

But I am telling you old stories out of the Roman history, instead of finishing my account of Roman bridges—which I may do without farther delay, for I cannot recollect that I have anything more to add about them. I will therefore dismiss them with one general remark, that none of the bridges, or remains of bridges, at Rome, can excite any extraordinary admiration. Their architecture is by no means fine. The most noble structure of this kind in Italy, is the *Pons Narniensis*, the ruined bridge of Narni, the work of Augustus. But the Pont du Gard,

* Livy, lib. vii. cap. 10.

near Nismes, a work truly Roman, is incomparably superior to it. The finest bridge in the world, that built by Trajan over the Danube, was destroyed by the mean envy of Hadrian, that great protector of the arts. What it may have been we know not, but in all that now remain, Italy is outdone by England. The ancient Romans, in this branch of architecture, are excelled by the modern Britons. Nor is there, through the whole of this land of arts, a single bridge, either ancient or modern, that can vie with the grandeur and beauty of Waterloo-bridge in London.

Neither, in the ingenuity and curious mechanism of our iron bridges, our chain bridges, and all our wonderful fabrications of bridges, did they ever bear the most remote competition with us. They no more dreamt of crossing waters by such machines, than of sailing upon them by steam, or descending into them in a diving-bell.

What would the heroes of Salamis and Actium think of a British ship of war, or a whole fleet of such ships? What would they say at the sight of a steam packet? How would the bewildered old philosophers gaze at our carriages, our mail-coaches, our rail-ways, our steam-engines, our manufactories, our printing presses, our telegraphs,* our guns, our artillery, our telescopes, and all our innumerable and magical inventions? What would they think of men flying about through the air in balloons, or descending into the bowels of the earth—deeper than Æneas in his visit to the infernal regions—and walking about leisurely at the bottom of the sea—nay, upon the top of it?†

I am persuaded, that if these ancient worthies could be brought back again, and see all these things going on, they would never believe they were in the same old world they had left.

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* We find, however, that Tiberius, at Capreæ, received immediate information of what passed at Rome, by signals established along the coast—a pretty near approach to telegraphs! Tacit. Ann. lib. v. c. 28. Suet. Tib. 65.

† A feat performed lately in many parts of Great Britain, by means of a new-invented machine.

LETTER XXXIII.

ARCHES—ARCH OF CLAUDIUS DRUSUS—TRIUMPHAL ARCHES OF TITUS, OR SEPTIMIUS SEVERUS, AND OF CONSTANTINE—ARCH OF GALLIENUS—ARCH OF DOLABELLA AND SYLVANUS—ARCH OF S. LAZARO—THE DESTROYED ARCHES OF MARCUS AURELIUS, CLAUDIUS, AND GORDIAN.

WITHOUT the limits of the ancient city, and close to the present Porta di San Sebastiano, stands an arch, believed to be the arch of Claudius Drusus Nero, dedicated to him by the Senate, in the year of Rome 745, for his victories over the Rhœti in the reign of Augustus. He was the first who received the title of Germanicus, which his son afterwards so nobly won, and one of the youngest who ever obtained the honour of a triumph. He died in the bloom of youth, and in the rank of a private citizen, though he was the son, the brother, and the father of an Emperor.*

This arch cannot be classed with the three Triumphal Arches of the Emperors. It boasts, indeed, little of splendour or ornament; but its architecture is noble, and bespeaks that era when the arts trusted for effect to grandeur of design, rather than richness of decoration. It consists of a single arch, and is built of large masses of Tiburtine stone. The two remaining columns of African marble on one of its fronts, are pronounced by connoisseurs to be in a style so inferior to that of the arch, that they must have been added in a latter age, probably that of Caracalla, at which period this arch was forced into the service of an aqueduct, and served for the conveyance of the Aqua Antoniana to the *Thermæ* of Caracalla.

* He was the son of Livia, the step-son of Augustus, the brother of Tiberius, and the father of Claudius. But a greater honour was his, he was the father of Germanicus.

In the opinion of many, indeed, it was originally built for this purpose by that emperor; but, besides that the architecture does not seem to correspond with that period, it is not likely that he would take the trouble to erect another arch over the Via Appia, when he must have found one ready built;—I mean the arch of Drusus, which Suetonius and Tacitus place here, and which I believe this to be. A medal of Claudius's reign, bearing that arch on its reverse, proves that, like this, it consisted of one arch only.

The Arch of Titus—the most ancient, and perhaps the most faultless, of the Triumphal Arches—was the work of an age when the arts, which, in the reign of Domitian, had degenerated from their ancient simplicity into a style of false and meretricious ornament, had revived in their fullest purity and vigour beneath the patronage of Trajan. But we now see it to great disadvantage. The hand of time has robbed it of much of its ancient beauty; his "effacing fingers" have obliterated much of the expression and grace, and even outline of the bass reliefs, the design and composition of which we can yet admire. It consists of a single arch; of eight marble columns that once adorned it, four have entirely disappeared, and two only are entire. The interior of the arch is decorated with two fine bass reliefs, representing, on one side, Titus in his car of triumph, conducted by the Genius of Rome, and crowned by the hand of Victory; on the other, the spoils of the Temple of Jerusalem, the seven-branched candlesticks, the trumpets, the golden table with the showbread, and the captive Jews. On the roof is the apotheosis of Titus; for this arch of his triumph was not erected till the victor was cold in the grave. But this beautiful monument, raised by the taste and generosity of one emperor to the virtues and glory of another, now totters to its fall; and no distant generation may perhaps see even its ruins only in description. Yet, mutilated and moldered as it is, it affords the earliest, and perhaps the most faultless, specimen of the composite order which ancient taste has bequeathed to modern times. It is accordingly received as the canon of that order, which

was probably introduced about this period. In the age of Augustus, at least, it was certainly unknown, for Vitruvius does not describe it.

The Arch of Severus is much less beautiful, and more entire. It consists of three arches, one large, and two smaller ones, of Grecian marble, the smoothness and colour of which are so completely gone, that the material is now scarcely recognisable. I will spare you any criticism upon it. The heavy and clumsy style of its architecture is sufficiently striking, when viewed beside the noble buildings of the Forum, in which it stands. Indeed, I know few ancient edifices in which the arts have been so completely tortured out of their native graces. The whole building is covered with a confusion of bass reliefs, and their deformity of design and execution is sufficiently evident through all the injuries of time and accident. The Dacians and the Romans, the victors and the vanquished, are all levelled in equality of ugliness; and nothing can be understood where the artist had not skill enough to tell his story. Though this arch is entire, the sculpture has evidently suffered from fire. Indeed, it is only wonderful that it should have sustained so little injury; for, during many ages, a part of it was built up in the old church of SS. Sergius and *Bacchus*, (who, by the way, I suspect was another Pagan Deity sainted)—and the Pentelicon marble of the arch served as a basement for the brick belfry. When this nuisance was removed I know not, but we are assured that the two lateral arches were used as shops even in the nineteenth century.*

The Arch of Constantine, though of a later and a darker period, when the arts had fallen into still deeper degradation, is, I think, by far the most noble of the Triumphal Arches of Rome. Its superiority, no doubt, partly arises from its fine preservation, but chiefly from its pilfered columns, its beautiful sculptured medallions, and bass reliefs, which commemorate the victories of

* Del Foro Romano, p. 116.

Trajan, and have evidently been torn from one of his Triumphal Arches. But may not the Arch itself, as well as the columns and the sculpture, have been a transformed Arch of Trajan?* I see no other supposition that can account for the striking superiority of its architecture over every other building of the age of Constantine. Its ancient magnificence still stands unimpaired. Eight fluted Corinthian columns of *giallo antico* marble support the figures of eight Dacian captive kings, of *Pavonazzetto*, violet-veined, or Phrygian marble; and although one column, one Dacian,† and all their eight heads, are modern, the general effect is scarcely impaired by these restorations.

The bass reliefs on the eastern and western sides of the Arch represent the battle of Trajan against the Dacians. In one of those in the interior of the great arch we see another battle, in which the valour and the clemency of Trajan are signalized, by killing with his own hand a resisting enemy, and sparing the life of a kneeling suppliant. In the other, the battle terminates in victory, and he makes his triumphal entry into Rome. One of the circular bass reliefs again represents his triumphal entry into Rome, crowned by Victory, and attended by Mercy. The others represent Trajan depriving a barbarian king, believed to be the King of Armenia, of his dominions—investing another monarch, supposed to be the King of Parthia, with the crown—haranguing the soldiers—going out to the chase—slaying a bear—extending the Appian Way from Beneventum to Brundusium—feeding the poor—sacrificing to Apollo—to Diana—to Mars, and to Hercules. In another is represented the expiatory sacrifice of the *Suovetaurilia*, in which a sow, a sheep, and a bull, were offered up every lustrum; and in the last, we see the Roman soldiers

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* Forsyth seems also to lean to this opinion.

† The modern column is the angular one at the north-east corner, and is of a white sort of marble. The modern Dacian is the last statue but one on the south-east corner, and is also of white marble.

dragging before Trajan the pretended deserters sent by Decebalus to assassinate him.

These bass reliefs are certainly among the finest that time has spared; and the beauty of their contour, and perfection of their design, are still apparent through all the injuries of neglect and exposure.

How strikingly do these exquisitely sculptured *pictures* of Trajan's victories contrast with the little, misshapen, unintelligible figures on Constantine's frieze! One might mistake the latter for the first rude essays of art, but that they bear not the promise of its infancy. It is apparent that they are the feeble efforts of decay and corruption. Sculpture had then fallen into second childhood—into the mere oblivion of old age.

The Victor, the Triumphal Car, and the Fiery Steeds, no longer hold their appropriate station on the grass-grown platform at the top of this Arch, or on that of Septimius Severus. In the interior of both are chambers, to which those who have sufficient activity and curiosity may ascend on ladders, for there is no entrance from below.

I have already described the Arch of the Porta Maggiore, the little Arch of Septimius Severus, and the Arch of Janus, in the Forum Boarium; and there is no other arch now existing in Rome which can awaken interest or admiration, though there are some which we must briefly mention.

The Arch of Gallienus—or rather its remains—for the central arch is alone standing, and two small ones, which it is said to have formerly boasted, have disappeared,—is a stone structure, of mean architecture, which stands on the Esquiline Hill, near the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore. The inscription records, that it was raised to that emperor by one of his servile subjects —by a slave to a tyrant. A trophy worthy of it—a chain, to which the keys of Tusculum were once attached, in commemoration of a *Roman triumph* of the *twelfth century* —is still suspended upon it.

Near the Church of San Tomaso in Formis, on the Cœlian Hill, is a plain arch, erected, as its inscription shows, by the Consuls Dolabella and Silanus, in the reign

of Augustus, but for what purpose is unknown. Nero took it into his Aqueduct.

At the base of the Aventine Hill, on the road towards the Porta San Paola, the road passes under a low brick arch, now called Arco di San Lazaro, but popularly believed to have been originally erected to Horatius Cocles, in honour of his memorable single-handed combat with the Etruscan army near the adjacent Pons Sublicius. But Livy, who relates that the Commonwealth awarded him as much ground as he could encircle with a plough, and the honour of a statue in the Comitium, makes no mention of any arch ; and the silence of so correct and minute a writer is, I think, a decisive proof that none was ever built.

Two inscriptions, belonging to a Triumphal Arch of Germanicus, it seems, were found near here, from whence Venuti sagely conjectures this to be that Triumphal Arch. It is most strange that any person in his right senses could look at this trumpery erection, and mistake it for a Triumphal Arch at all ; much less that the extravagant imagination could ever have occurred to him that this little paltry brick structure was erected, in that age of taste and magnificence, to a conqueror of imperial blood—to a hero who had refused the empire—to a prince idolized by the people ; whose triumphant return was hailed with wild rejoicings, that made the dark soul of Tiberius tremble on his throne—whose supposed recovery from his last sickness caused the gates of the temples to be broken open at midnight, to offer up thanks to the gods*—and whose death filled Italy with one loud and deep voice of lamentation !

The Arch of Germanicus it cannot be, and what it was, is alike unacertainable and uninteresting ; for, except that it is ancient, it is really much such an arch as would be thrown over a village brook.

These are all the ancient arches that now remain. Several have been demolished even in modern times. The most beautiful was knocked down by Alexander VI.

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* Tacitus, Ann. lib. ii.

who is called, by the good Catholics themselves, the Devil of a Pope ; and we heretics, therefore, may be pardoned for wishing him at the devil before he had done the deed. The people of Rome, to this day, are persuaded he was little better than Lucifer, if not that arch-fiend himself. It was to improve the city that this worthy personage signalized his taste and judgment by pulling down the Triumphal Arch of Marcus Aurelius, which, in his time, adorned the Corso, in order that the direct line of the street might no longer be interrupted. This beautiful monument of antiquity stood at the Piazza di San Lorenzo in Lucina, beside the Fiano Palace, then called *di Portogallo*, which gave its name also to the arch. The admirable bass reliefs which were taken from this arch at the period of its destruction, and are now preserved on the first landing of the staircase of the Picture Gallery of the Capitol, gave a high idea of its perfection. Two of its columns, of *verde antico* marble, are in the Corsino Palace at St. John Lateran. In that part of the Corso near the Vicolo di Macel di Corvi, in the pontificate of Pius IV. were found the overthrown and buried bassi relievi, and broken columns of a magnificent Triumphal Arch, of Grecian marble, erected in honour of the Emperor Claudius after his triumphal return from Britain, and described by Suetonius.

Some remains of an arch dedicated to the Emperor Gordian, were found in the Corso, near the piazza Sciarra; but, from the state of the arts at that period, its destruction can excite comparatively little regret.

LETTER XXXIV.

AQUEDUCTS.

We drove this morning to the Basilica of Santa Croce in Gierusalemme, on the Esquiline Hill, and leaving the carriage, walked through an adjoining field, or vineyard, to see the magnificent ruins of the Claudian Aqueduct, whose lofty arches of stone stand at the walls of Rome, an everlasting monument of her power and splendour. This mighty work, which was carried through the hills, and across the valleys of Latium, for a distance of fifty miles, terminated at this spot, where it is joined by the brick arches of the Aqueduct of Nero, which extended to the brink of the Cœlian Hill, where it supplied his Nymphæum, his fountains, his lakes, his baths, and all the prodigal luxuries of the gardens of his Golden House. It was not till long after the bounds of the imperial palace were circumscribed, that the aqueduct was prolonged by Septimius Severus to the Palatine Hill.

The ruined Aqueducts, which stretch over the Campagna to the south, in long and broken lines of lofty arches, are the Martian and the Claudian.

Of all the Aqueducts of ancient Rome, these alone remain, even in ruin; yet, shattered and fallen as they are, we still see their former greatness in their present decay, and vainly ask ourselves when earth will view such works again?

As if to contrast their grandeur with its own meanness, run parallel to it the low arches of a wretched little modern Aqueduct, like a pigmy beside a giant. We needed not this at Rome to make us feel that we are the dwindled sons of little men.

An elaborate work was written on the Aqueducts of ancient Rome, in the age of Trajan, by Frontinus, who was employed by Nerva to repair the Aqueducts. To say the truth, I have never read a word of it myself, but I mention it, that you may, if you please. I contented my-

self with Nardini, and other Italian authors, who no doubt borrowed their knowledge from his lucubrations, as I shall do from theirs; and who proved quite as tiresome to me, as I can possibly do to you. Since I cannot be learned, however, I will endeavour not to be long.

For nearly four centuries and a half after the building of Rome, its inhabitants had no water except what the Tiber and the natural springs supplied. At that period, in the year of Rome 441, Appius Claudius Cæcus, then Censor, after he had finished the Appian Way, constructed the first aqueduct,* which conveyed a stream of water, called, from him, Aqua Appia, from a distance of eleven miles on the way to Prænestе, for the most part under ground.

Thirty years afterwards, a second aqueduct was made, which brought the water of the Anio from the neighbourhood of Tivoli, and the expense of its erection was defrayed by the spoils taken from Pyrrhus.

The Martian Aqueduct, the ruins of which still remain, and form one of the few vestiges of the works of the Republic, was built by Quintius Martus Rex, Censor, a hundred and twenty-five years before Christ. The *Aqua Martia* was esteemed the most salubrious among the ancients, but the water no longer flows to Rome. It is lost in the Anio, now the Teverone.

Besides the *Aqua Martia*—the *Aqua Tepula* and the *Aqua Julia* were subsequently conveyed to Rome in different channels, but in the same aqueduct.

Close to the Porta Maggiore, we observed, in the ruined wall of the Martian Aqueduct, the three distinct channels of these three different waters. The lowest contained the *Aqua Martia*, the central the *Aqua Tepula*, and the highest the *Aqua Julia*, which was brought to Rome by Marcus Agrippa, who gave it that name in honour of Julius Cæsar. Agrippa also brought the *Aqua Virgo* to Rome, for the use of his baths, which is said to have received its name from a virgin, who showed the source to some thirsty Roman soldiers; or, according to other ac-

* Diod. lib. xx. cap. 36.

counts, merely from its purity. This water, after being lost for a length of time, was recovered, and again brought to Rome by Nicholas V., and it still flows into the fountain of Trevi.

Some remains of the ancient Aqueduct of this water, retaining, in Italian, its ancient name, the *Aqua Vergine*, were found under ground, near the Church of St. Ignatus.

Augustus brought a stream of water from Alzium, on the opposite side of the Tiber, for the use of the Naumachia. Some remains of his Aqueduct are said to be preserved in that of Paul V., which brings a copious, but a different stream of water over Mount Janiculus to his Fontana Paolina.

That noble Aqueduct of fifty miles in length, built by the Emperor Claudius, the ruined arches of which still bestride the Campagna, and terminate where we now gaze upon them, conveyed two waters to Rome,—the *Aqua Claudia*,* which, after the *Aqua Martia*, was considered the best,—and a branch of the Anio, called *Anio Novus*, (to distinguish it from another called the *Anio Vetus*,) which had the highest level of any water in Rome.

The first was conveyed a distance of thirty-five, the last of sixty-two miles, as one of the inscriptions on the Porta Maggiore records.

The Claudian Aqueduct, as I have already mentioned, was prolonged from the Porta Maggiore to the brink of the Cœlian Hill by Nero, and from thence to the Palatine by Septimius Severus. That emperor, however, is said to have built another Aqueduct, some remains of which are still to be seen near Torre de' Mezza Via, half way to Albano. Caracalla carried the *Aqua Algenziana*, so called from Mount Algidus, from whence it was brought, to his baths. It flowed in the channel above the arch of Claudius Drusus, at the Porta Sebastiana. It was sometimes called *Aqua Antoniana*. Trajan brought a stream

* "Claudius brought to Rome in a stone aqueduct the cool and plentiful springs of the Claudian Waters, one of which was called Cæruleus, the other Curtius, or Albudinus. He also brought the Anio Novus." Suet. Claud. 20.

of water from the other side of the Tiber, and probably made use of Augustus's Aqueduct for its conveyance, for it is not recorded that he built any.

Alexander Severus brought to Rome a water called by his name; and the magnificent ruins of the Aqueduct which meet the eye on the road to Palestrina, are believed to be of his erection. Several other waters were brought by other emperors. In republican times, the Censors and Ædiles had the care of the Aqueducts. Under Augustus, special officers were first appointed for that purpose, called *Curatores Aquarum*, who had under their command a band, which was increased by Claudius to upwards of 700 workmen, constantly employed in their enlargement or repair.

In the time of Frontinus there were nine Aqueducts, and authors of later days magnify the number to fourteen, and even to twenty. But the latter statement, which rests on the authority of Victor alone, is supposed to be exaggerated; it is probable that he counted the different channels, or conduits of water, not the Aqueducts. Whatever was the reason of building these mighty bridges of water, however, it is certain, that in the time of Trajan at least, the Romans were not ignorant of the simple principle that water will rise to the height of its source. Pliny says,—"*Aqua in plumbo subit altitudinem exortûs sui.*"* They could not possibly suppose this faculty of water was exercised only in lead pipes.

By some the ruin of the Aqueducts is ascribed to Vitiges; by some to Attila; and by others, with more appearance of reason, to Totila,—for this act of wanton destruction is sufficiently consonant with his actual demolition of one-third of the walls, and his declared resolution of razing the whole city to the ground. Perhaps all these barbarians contributed to their ruin; but, be this as it may, it is certain the Aqueducts were ruined in the sixth century; yet their remains seem destined to strike future ages with wonder; and, if exempted from violence, to last as long as the world itself.

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* Hist. lib. xxx. cap. 6. § 31.

Notwithstanding their destruction, Rome is now, as anciently, the city in the world the best supplied with water. Three Popes have conducted to it three noble streams; though why they thought it necessary to construct aqueducts, instead of employing the more humble and ordinary mode of conveying in pipes, is more than I can imagine.

The best of these modern waters is the Acqua Felice, brought by Sixtus V. to the Fontana di Termini, partly in the repaired arches of the Claudian Aqueduct; the next is the Acqua Vergine, the only ancient water that flows to Rome, reconducted by Nicolas V. to the Fontana di Trevi; the last is that brought over Mount Janiculus by Paul V. to the Fontana di Paolina, which is so unwholesome that its use is prohibited.

Upon the wide waste of the Esquiline Hill stands a brick building called the "Trophies of Marius," from two sculptured marble trophies which adorned two of its niches, and which are now in the Piazza del Campidoglio. Of these trophies, and of the discordant opinions entertained respecting them by the learned, I have already given you some account.*

With respect to the building itself, I believe there is but one opinion, viz. that it is a castle of the Julian water, which, as we have just seen, was brought by Agrippa in the Martian Aqueduct.

This *castellum* was one of those immense reservoirs from which the water was distributed to different parts of the city.

There are some remains of another in the vineyard in which the Temple of Minerva Medica stands, now converted into a sort of dwelling-house; and scattered vestiges of many more may still be traced.

Before leaving the vineyard adjoining the Santa Croce in Gierusalemme, we traced, or fancied we traced, the remains of the *Agger* of Tarquinius Superbus.

We lingered long amidst the ruins that cover "the wide field of the Esquiline." Though yet early in

* Vide Letter XV.

February, the ground beneath our feet was thickly painted with the blue scentless violet, and our senses were regaled with the odoriferous smell of bean blossoms.

The extraordinary effect of perfumes in this climate, which our countrymen are so apt to impute to the prejudice or affectation of the Romans, was here exemplified upon one of our own nation, and one of the most incredulous of them—Lady ——, who nearly fainted from the scent of the bean field, and revived as soon as she was carried out of it and placed in the open carriage, although still exposed to the beams of the sun, which I fancied had been the cause of her indisposition. Either the perfume or the heat, (which even at this early season was powerful,) proved overpowering to several others of the party ; but they were so tempered by the soft Favonian breeze, that I felt only that exhilaration of spirits which the delightful sensation of returning spring, and the sight of nature rejoicing beneath its general influence, never fail to inspire.

But my present business is not to describe the beauties of spring, nor anything but Aqueducts ; and I am sure you will rejoice to hear that you have got to an end of them, and of this letter.

LETTER XXXV.

OBELISKS.

Rome alone, of all the cities of the world, boasts the Obelisks of Egypt. These sublime monuments of the grandeur of past ages, were not formed, like the works of our degenerate days, by the slow aggregation of minute parts, but hewn out of one tremendous block of everlasting granite. They were destined to perpetuate the memory of Egyptian kings, whose very existence is now forgotten. They were brought hither to swell the triumph of Roman emperors, whose long line they have

seen pass away. They were overthrown by barbarians, whose civilized descendants now lament their fall ; and they have been re-erected to the glory of Popes, with whose obscure names they are now inscribed. It is a strange, and somewhat a humiliating contrast, that it has been considered a triumph in modern art, even to raise from the ground those masses, which were brought from the remote regions of Nubia, to grace the ancient capital of the world.

So arduous did this enterprise appear, and so great were the difficulties attending it, that when the removal of the obelisk, in the grand Piazza of St. Peter's was determined upon, several years of preparation elapsed before it could be carried into effect. Men of science, all over Europe, were consulted upon the means of accomplishing it. Proposals from architects, engineers, and mathematicians, were sent in from all quarters ; and when, after mature deliberation, the plan of Fontana was adopted, and every thing was at last in readiness for the great attempt, the day was ushered in by the celebration of high mass in St. Peter's, after which, the architect and the workmen received the solemn benediction of the Pope,* who implored the blessing of Heaven to prosper their great undertaking. The engines were then set in motion, and an incredible number of labourers and horses strained every nerve to aid their effect ; but it was not until after fifty-two unsuccessful efforts, that the mighty mass was raised from the earth and swung in air. Then the shouts of assembled thousands rent the air ;—the cannon from the Castle San Angelo proclaimed the triumphant tidings, and the bells of all the churches rang peals of joy.

This obelisk has no hieroglyphics upon it. All authorities agree that it was erected in Heliopolis by a son of Sesostris. According to Pliny, this son was Nuncoreus ; according to Herodotus, he was Pheron,† who, on the

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* Sixtus V. A. D. 1589.

† If we may believe some ancient writers, this prince lived long before the siege of Troy ; but there is nothing so uncertain and contradictory as the early chronology of Egypt.

recovery of his sight, consecrated it and another to the Sun. It was brought from Egypt by Caligula, who erected it in the Vatican Circus,* where it remained, exactly on the spot now occupied by the Sacristy of St. Peter's, till it was removed to its present situation in the centre of the Piazza, by Sixtus V. It is the only Obelisk at Rome that has not been broken and overthrown; and from its state of perfect preservation, its purity of colour, and freshness of finish, it is, perhaps, the most beautiful of them all.

The Obelisk that stands in the Piazza del Popolo, the first that now strikes the eye of the stranger on his entrance into the Eternal City—was also the first that was ever seen in Rome. It was brought from Egypt by Augustus, and placed in the Circus Maximus, where it served as the gnomon of a dial.

According to Pliny, it was the work of Senneserteus, or Semnesyrtæus, who was King of Egypt in the time of Pythagoras, and who is believed to be the same with Psammuthis, or Psammis, the son of Nechos, or Nechao,† whose tomb has recently been discovered at Thebes, by Mr. Belzoni, adorned with the finest specimens of Egyptian painting which have come down to our time. The names of the father and the son are inscribed on all the middle lines of the hieroglyphics of this Obelisk, and on one side of it the king is represented as doing homage to his predecessor.‡

The last Obelisk that was ever brought to Rome, and the largest of them all, was transported from Egypt by Constantius, and erected on the Spinæ of the Circus Maximus. It was originally dedicated, in Thebes, to the Sun, by Ramesses, or Ramises, or Rhamestes, the son of Heron, (according to Hermapion,) who is supposed to have flourished fifteen hundred years before Christ. The name of Mesphres, (the fifth King of the eighteenth dynasty, according to Manetho,) who flourished seventeen hundred

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* Nat. Hist. lib. xxxvi. cap. 8.

† Vide the article Egypt, in the Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica, vol. IV. Part I.

‡ Vide Encyc. Brit. Suppl. vol. iv. page 62.

years before Christ, is inscribed in hieroglyphics on all the four sides. Thus, if the opinion of Herodotus be entitled to credit, that the pyramid of Cheops was built only twelve generations before Cambyses, this Obelisk is of far higher antiquity; and so indeed are all the true Obelisks of Egypt. This great Obelisk now stands in front of the Lateran Church, where it was re-erected by Sixtus V. From its extraordinary height, it sustained great injury by its fall; yet, after lying on the ground for ages, and its shattered fragments being patched together, and elevated once more, its diminished height still reaches to upwards of a hundred feet.

The Obelisk, mentioned by Pliny, which was brought to Rome by Augustus, and erected in the Campus Martius, in order to serve as a gnomon or meridian, now stands on Monte Citorio.*

This Obelisk is said by Pliny† to have been the work of Sesostris; but it is attributed, by the highest authority of the present day,‡ to Pheron, his son, (who, according to Herodotus, erected two Obelisks,) though it bears the name of his father, as well as his own. The inscription is now believed to contain only the pompous list of the genealogy and the praises of the King, instead of those annals of ancient Egyptian learning and science which, in the time of Pliny, it was supposed to record.

The column of red granite erected by Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus to Antoninus Pius, which was dug up here, was used in the repair and re-erection of this Obelisk by Pius VI.

The two Obelisks that stood at the entrance of the Mausoleum of Augustus are believed to have been brought

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* Montc Citorio is rather a rise than a hill, and is wholly unmentioned in all we hear of Ancient Rome. Its name, however, is deduced from antiquity. Nardini, lib. vi. 3, supposes it to be corrupted from *Citarorio*, or the place where the Centurions were cited one by one. The vulgar believe that this mount was raised by the earth, with which they suppose the Pantheon to have been filled, in order to build the dome upon it! We can scarcely imagine that the great architects of antiquity would be obliged to have recourse to such a clumsy contrivance.

† Pliny, Nat. Hist. lib. xxxv. cap. 15.

‡ Dr. Young.—Vide Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica, vol. iv. p. 61.

to Rome by Claudius. They are both supposed to have been erected more than 1000 years before Christ, by Smarus and Vaphrius, two Egyptian kings. It is rather more certain that one of them was erected in front of the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore, by Sixtus V., and the other between the equestrian statues of Castor and Pollux on Monte Cavallo, by Pius VI. Both are destitute of hieroglyphics.

The Obelisk found in the Circus of Caracalla now stands on the Fountain of the Piazza Navona. Its history is unknown, by whom made, or by whom transported to Rome. Kircher conjectured it to have been erected in Heliopolis by Sothis. It was removed here by Innocent X.

Two little Obelisks, which are believed to have stood of old before the Temples of Isis and Serapis, were found in the gardens of the Dominican Convent, behind the Church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva. One of them, sadly reduced from its ancient altitude, is now elevated on the back of a marble elephant in front of that church; the other adorns the Fountain in the Piazza della Rotonda.

I cannot admire the taste of elevating Obelisks on the backs of animals, or sticking them upon the top of a little perpendicular pedestal; in one of which situations they are invariably placed at Rome. They ought to stand, as in ancient Egypt, on a platform of stone, raised only two or three steps from the ground.

An Obelisk, the history of which seems very obscure, stands in the grounds of the Villa Mattei, on the Cœlian Hill; and another, which was found in the Circus of Heliogabalus, near the Porta Maggiore, now lies broken on the ground in a back Court of the Vatican Palace.

The ancient history of the Obelisk which stood in the Circus of Sallust is a little obscure, but its authenticity is indisputable. It is not known by what Egyptian King it was made, nor by what Roman Emperor it was transported to Rome. The names of the same royal father and son, which are inscribed four times upon the Obelisk in the Piazzo del Popolo, are once repeated here, and are supposed to have been copied from it, as well as many of the other hieroglyphics, which are exact duplicates of

those upon that Obelisk. Some of the hieroglyphics which appear on the shattered parts of the Sallustian Obelisk are spurious, being modern restorations.

This Obelisk now crowns the lofty summit of the Pincian Hill, in front of the Church of the Trinità de' Monti, towering far above the domes, the towers, and the palaces of "the Eternal City," and enjoys by far the most beautiful situation of all the Obelisks of Rome. But no cold description can convey to you, at a distance, the feelings with which such monuments as these are viewed here. How often, when the calm moonbeams have shone on the beautiful solitude of the Trinità de' Monti, and involuntarily awakened feelings too deep for expression, have I gazed, in the silence of the night, on the tall summit of that stupendous Obelisk pointing to the skies, and thought that, among the works of men, there are none more sublime than these! Their formation is lost in the earliness of time, and they will probably last till time be no more; till the earth, and "all that it inherits," have passed away. In them, art seems for once to have vied in durability with the works of nature. Formed of the most imperishable of materials, they are fashioned by the being of a day; but they have remained, while countless generations have gone down to the dust. They have survived all that mankind deem most stable—laws, languages, institutions, nations, dynasties, governments, and gods. They are the work of a people now no more—the monuments of a religion passed away, and covered with the characters of a language that is forgotten. The unknown antiquity, and the mysterious obscurity that involve their origin—the long flight of ages past which they have seen, and the dark and distant futurity to come which they seem destined to witness—open on our mind while we contemplate them, and make us sensible of our own littleness—make us remember, that, in the passage of a moment, we who now feel, think, admire, and meditate, shall be no more; while they will still stand, the wonder and admiration of the world.

LETTER XXXVI.

TOMBS—THE SEPULCHRE OF PUBLICOLA, OF FABRICIUS, OF THE VESTAL VIRGINS, OF BIBULUS, OF THE CLAUDIAN FAMILY, OF TRAJAN, OF THE SCIPIOS, OF THE MANIGLIA FAMILY—THE COLUMBARIUM OF THE FREEDMEN OF AUGUSTUS—TOWER OF CECILIA METELLA—FRAGMENTS OF THE SEPULCHRE OF THE SERVILIAN FAMILY.

Tombs formed a far more prominent feature in ancient communities than in ours. They were not crowded into obscure churchyards, nor hidden in invisible vaults, but were sedulously spread abroad in the most conspicuous places, and by the sides of the public ways. It would seem as if these mementos of mortality were not so painful nor so saddening to Pagans as to Christians; and that death, when believed to be final dissolution, was not so awful and revolting as when known to be the passage to immortality. Is it that, in the secret heart of man, the small still voice of conscience bids him to tremble, rather than rejoice in the judgment to come, so distinctly announced—a state of future existence so dimly unveiled? Fear is a more powerful passion of the mind than hope, and therefore the threatened terrors of futurity may often be predominant over its promised joys—therefore revelation may have thrown over the valley of the shadow of death a deeper gloom, rather than a brighter radiance. But I pretend not to explain the paradox, I only state it; and certain it is, that every image connected with human dissolution, seems now more fearful to the imagination, and is far more sedulously shunned, than it ever was in times when the light of Christianity had not dawned upon the world.

The tombs of the Romans were characterized by their impressive grandeur. Those who have traced the long line of the Appian Way, between its ruined and blackened sepulchres, or stood in the Street of Tombs that leads to

the Gate of Pompeii, and gazed on the sculptured magnificence of these marble dwellings of the dead, must have felt their solemnity, and admired their splendour.

The ancient Romans never permitted the dead to be buried within the city,* a practice well worthy the imitation of its modern inhabitants. But this law must be understood with this limitation, that the Senate occasionally granted exemption from it, to distinguished individuals, though so rarely, that a tomb within the walls of Rome seems to have been considered a reward of the most pre-eminent virtue.

Publicola was buried near the Velia, on the Palatine Hill,† and his descendants possessed, though they did not exercise, the right of interment there. Fabricius,‡ too, was buried within the city; and it would appear that the Vestal Virgins who died spotless received the same honourable tomb.§

Trajan was the first Emperor, but not, as the antiquaries pretend, the first man, who received the honour of sepulture in Rome. Indeed, the vestiges of two tombs, of far more ancient date, stand in the heart of the city; and though it has pleased some of the learned to assert that they were not within the walls, until, (as they say,) Trajan enlarged their circle to comprehend his Forum,‖ I cannot see how buildings situated on the declivity of the Capitoline (the central) Hill, could ever have been excluded from the walls that enclosed the Seven Hills of Rome.

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* Hominem mortuum in urbe ne sepelito, neve urito; one of the laws of the Twelve Tables.

† Plutarch's Life of Publicola.

‡ Cic. Legg. ii. 23.

§ Serv. in Virg. Æn. ix.

‖ I believe this assertion to be entirely devoid of foundation. The inscription upon Trajan's Pillar records the cutting down of the Quirinal Hill to form a plain for his Forum, but mentions no extension of the walls; a circumstance which, if it had happened, would surely not have been left unnoticed.

Indeed, the inscription on one of the tombs* proves that the place of its erection was an honour accorded by the Senate and people of Rome to the merits and services of Caius Publicius Bibulus—a name which, however, makes no great figure in history; and, in fact, after the most diligent research, it has been impossible to discover who he was.

He could not have been *that* colleague of Cæsar, whose useful properties, as a cipher, made the Roman wits remark, that it was not the consulship of Bibulus and Cæsar, but of Julius and Cæsar. The Bibulus of this tomb, whatever may have been his active or negative virtues, was an Ædile only, not a Consul.

Livy mentions C. Publicius Bibulus, Pro Questor, in the Consulship of Q. Fabius Flaccus, and Tribune of the people three years after, in the Consulship of Q. Fabius Maximus; but I cannot find that he was ever Ædile, much less that he either merited or received the honour of such a burial.

There was an Ædile of that name certainly, in the reign of Tiberius, whom Tacitus casually mentions, but not in a way which can lead us to infer that so rare an honour had been conferred upon him. The obsequious Senate, indeed, might never have remarked the absence of merit, if such had been the will of the tyrant, but the historian, in that case, would scarcely have omitted to record the fact.

A broken wall of Tiburtine stone, adorned with four mutilated pilasters, is all that remains of the sepulchre of this unknown Bibulus, which now forms a part of a mean dwelling-house on the left side of a dirty narrow lane, leading from the Piazza Trajana to the Via Marforio. It is so undistinguished in its appearance, that we passed it

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* The inscription is as follows:—

C. POBLICIO. L. F. BIBVLO. AED. PL. HONORIS.
VIRTVTISQVE. CAVSSA. SENATVS.
CONSVLTO. POPVLIQVE. IVSSV. LOCVS.
MONVMENTO. QVO. IPSE. POSTERIQVE.
EIVS.—INFERRENTVR. PVBLICE. DATVS. EST.

twice without observing it, even when looking for it, having been led, by the pompous descriptions of books and antiquaries, to expect something much more important. The present "tenant of the tomb" willingly permitted us to enter; but, in truth, there was nothing to see in the inside except dirt.

Not far from hence are some obscure vestiges, said to be the tomb of the Claudian family, but I assure you, upon my word, that they are by no means worth all the pains and labour, and filthy odours, I went through to find them out.

The Roman satirists, Juvenal and Horace, censure the pomp and splendour of the Tombs, particularly of those on the Via Appia. On that "Queen of ways," and way to the Queen of cities, were crowded the proud sepulchres of the most distinguished Romans; and their mouldering remains still attest their ancient grandeur.

Their magnitude and magnificence, indeed, sufficiently prove, that, even in the dust, man is proud, but they may also teach him a lesson of humility; for, with two or three exceptions, the whole of these sepulchres, destined to perpetuate the memory of their unconscious tenants for ever, are wholly unknown. Vague conjecture has affixed to them, at random, the illustrious names of the mighty dead, but all are involved in one common oblivion. The tomb of the Scipios is alone distinguished among the crowd; and, in this instance, Fame has been just.

It is only thirty-seven years since this sepulchre was discovered. Because Livy and Cicero mention the Tomb of the Scipios as being without the Porta Capena, the antiquaries sagaciously concluded it must also be without its present substitute, the Porta San Sebastiano; never considering that, as the extension of the walls by Aurelian had removed that gate more than a mile beyond the situation of the ancient one, a building which was then without it, would now, most probably, be comprised within it. Having, however, fixed on one of the many old tombs beyond the modern gate for the Tomb of the Scipios, and having once called it such—the Tomb of the Scipios they resolved to maintain it to be, at all hazards; and, although a sepulchral inscription of one of the Scipios was dis-

covered two hundred years ago, on the spot where their sepulchre has since been found, a number of profound antiquaries, (among whom was the celebrated Maffei,) instead of causing the place to be examined, which would have settled the matter at once—in the true Italian style, set to work and wrote a variety of long treatises, to prove that this inscription was a forgery,* because it was not written as they thought it ought to be, and it was found where they thought it ought not to be.

It would seem impossible for a ray of truth to penetrate the thick mist of prejudice in which antiquaries involved themselves, or else one would imagine that the discovery of another sepulchral inscription,† to another of the Scipios, on the very same spot, about fifty years after, might have so far shaken their faith in their own conclusions, as to have had recourse to the simple expedient of examining the ground. No! Inscriptions declaring the Scipios to be buried here, brought no conviction to antiquaries who had previously settled that they were buried elsewhere; and, but for the accidental circumstance of a man digging in the vineyard to make a cellar, the Tomb of the Scipios might have remained undiscovered to this day.

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* Maffei, Art. Critici Lapidaria, p. 450. It was called the Barberini marble, because in the Barberini Collection. The inscription, in the curious antique Latin of that early period, I have thought worth preserving, as it is one of the most ancient extant. It is as follows:

HONC. OINO. PLOIRVME. CONSENTIONT. R.
DVONORO. OPTVMO. FVISE. VIRO
LVCIOM. SCIPIONE. FILIOS. BARBATI
CONSOL. CENSOR. AIDILIS. HIC. FVET. A.
HEC. CEPIT. CORSICA. ALERIAQUE. VRBE
DEDIT TEMPESTATEBVS. AIDE. MERETO.

It has been thus interpreted:—

HUNC. VNVM. PLVRIMI. CONSENTIUNT. ROMÆ.
BONORUM. OPTIMVM. FVISSE. VIRUM
LVCIVM. SCIPIONEM. FILIVS. BARBATI
CONSVL. CENSOR. AEDILIS. FVIT. ATQUE.
HIC. CEPIT. CORSICAM. ALERIAMQUE. VRBEM
DEDIT TEMPESTATIBUS. AEDEM. MERITO.

† Vide Marini, Iscrizioni Albane, p. 9.

On the road to the Porta San Sebastiano, a rude red-letter scrawl above the door of a vineyard, informs the passenger that this is the "*Sepolcro degli Scipioni.*" We stopped and entered it, not without respect mingled with awe, at the reflection, that we were in the cemetery of a long line of republican patriots and heroes, whose unblemished name was ever ennobled by hereditary virtues and hereditary honours. By the light of wax-tapers, we slowly advanced through the narrow winding way that leads to the interior of the vault. We bent down to read the names of the dead, but copies of the inscriptions have been substituted for the originals, which are placed in the Vatican, and every trace of the Scipios has been removed. Even their very bones have not been permitted to rest "within their marble cerements," but have been collected and carried off to gratify the puerile vanity of some Italian virtuoso.

The laurelled bust of Peperino stone found here, and which now stands on the Sarcophagus of Scipio Barbatus, in the Vatican, has been supposed to be that of the poet Ennius,* the friend and companion of Scipio Africanus, whose last request on his death-bed was, that he might be buried by his side. But the tomb of the conqueror of Hannibal has not been found in the sepulchre of his ancestors; and it is somewhat more than doubtful whether his remains were ever interred here. The strange and inexplicable uncertainty which hung over the place of his death and burial, even in the time of Livy, it would be vain to seek to dispel now; since even then, it seems, "some said he died at Rome, and others at Linternum, and his tomb and statue were shown at both places.† I myself," he continues, "lately saw them at Linternum."

But the tradition that records the dignified exile of his latter years, and his dying request that his bones might lie there, "far from his ungrateful country," is given by

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* In Cicero's time, the grave of Ennius was thought to be in the Tomb of the Scipios. "Carus fuit Africano superiori noster Ennius. Itaque etiam in Sepulchro Scipionum putatur is esse constitutus è marmore." Cic. Or. Pro Arch. Poeta.

† Livy, lib. xxxviii. cap. 56. Dec. 4.

the historian as authentic, and it is supported by so much more of consistency and evidence, that we can scarcely refuse it our belief.

To this day, the little lake at Linternum, upon whose shore he lived, retains the name of Lago di Patria, from the well-known fragment of inscription found there. It consisted only of

—— ta Patria —— nec——

but we are surely justified in considering it a part of that touching epitaph recorded by Livy,

Ingrata Patria, nec ossa quidem mea habes;

and this circumstance alone is in itself "confirmation strong," that the remains of Scipio repose there.*

We must therefore conclude, that "the tomb and statue which, Livy says, were shown of Scipio at Rome," were merely a cenotaph to his memory.

Near the Mausoleum of Hadrian stood an ancient marble pyramid of immense size, which in modern days was vulgarly called the tomb, and may have been this cenotaph, of Scipio Africanus; although that is far from probable; for marble was never, as far as we know, used for building till the Augustan age. This pyramid was removed by Pope Alexander VI. when he opened the Piazza of St. Peter.

Plutarch seems to insinuate, that the days of Scipio Africanus were not only imbittered by disgrace and neglect, but shortened by poison. "That he died without previous sickness, and that there appeared marks of violence on the body; that most people laid his death to the charge of Fulvius his avowed enemy, and that Caius Gracchus himself was not unsuspected."†

No memento of the Younger Scipio (Asiaticus) has been found in the tomb. Indeed, from the small number

* Seneca somewhere mentions the interment of Scipio at Linternum, but I cannot recover the passage.

† Plutarch's Life of C. Gracchus. Langhorne's Translation.

of inscriptions that have come to light, I cannot but suspect that many of them must have been destroyed or taken away, long before its present discovery. At that time, indeed, it bore intrinsic evidence of having been used for the interment of less ancient and honourable families, to make way for whom the ashes of the Scipios had probably been expelled. It is impossible to believe, that all the members of a long line of one of the most ancient and illustrious families of Rome, are comprehended in the few obituary tablets posted up in the Vatican. The inscription on the beautiful Doric tomb of Scipio Barbatus, is said to be the most ancient extant, and is much admired for its simplicity and conciseness. The Latin is of an early and unrefined age, before the language had attained perfection. The orthography is curious; and it has been observed, that the form of the letters inclines towards the Greek, a singularity I shall not attempt to preserve in my transcript.

CORNELIVS. LVCIVS. SCIPIO. BARBATVS. GNAIVOD. PATRE. PROGNATVS. FORTIS. VIR. SAPIENSQVE. QVOIVS. FORMA. VIRTVTEI. PARISVMA. FVIT. CONSOL. CENSOR. AIDILIS. QVEI. FVIT. APVD. VOS. TAVRASIA. CISAVNA. SAMNIO. CEPIT. SVBIGIT. OMNE. LOVCANA. OBSIDESQVE. ABDOVCIT.

Pliny remarks, that the Scipios had the singular custom of burying, instead of burning their dead.* The monster Sylla, who was descended from a branch of this illustrious family, was the first who departed from this rule. He commanded his body to be burnt, lest it should be treated with the same indignities he had shown towards the remains of Marius. Even his ashes do not pollute this sepulchre, for they were interred in the Campus Martius.

An unknown bust of white marble was found here, and also a gold ring, with a Victory, in intaglio on a cornelian stone, supposed to have been on the finger of one of the corpses. This precious relic was given by the late Pope Pius VI. to a Frenchman.

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* Pliny, Hist. Nat. lib. vii.

Exactly on the opposite side of the road to the sepulchre of the Scipiós, is that of the Maniglia family, ascertained by inscriptions found within it. One of the sepulchral statues which was discovered here, (now in the statuary Magazine of the Vatican,) is the resemblance of one of the ancient heads of that illustrious house, a Roman matron of advanced years, and most extraordinary ugliness, in the attitude and unveiled figure of the Venus di Medicis. The lady cannot be less than seventy; the likeness is evidently strong, and it conveys as correct a portrait of her mind as of her face. She has perpetuated at once her deformity and her vanity.

Roman Sepulchres were either square, circular, or pyramidal buildings, without windows, and with one entrance only, which was invariably on the side farthest from the public road. They usually consisted of a vault, in which the urns and sarcophagi were deposited, and a chamber (*Parentalia*) above, in which the statues or effigies of the dead were placed, and the libations and obsequies performed.

These sepulchres were generally places of family interment, like those of the Scipios and Maniglia; but sometimes they were solitary tombs, like those of Cecilia Metella, and Caius Cestius;—or great Mausolea like that of Augustus, capable of containing all the various branches of a family to the latest generations. That of Hadrian, though similar in form, was intended for himself alone. The imperial descendants of his line, Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius, were, however, interred in it.

From the Sepulchre of the Scipios, we pursued our way along the Via Appia, whose line is marked by unknown and ruined tombs. In gazing on them, on either side of the way, I understood the full force of the *Siste Viator*, the "Stop, Traveller;" so appropriate here, and so truly absurd, as applied in our little secluded village churchyards, where no traveller ever does pass.

The tomb so long reputed, and confidently maintained to be the Tomb of the Scipios, was pointed out to us. It is exactly opposite to the little Church of *Domine quo Vadis?* which, according to the Priests, stands on the very spot where the apparition of our Saviour bearing the

cross appeared to St. Peter, on which the apostle very naturally put this question. The answer, if there was any, has not been recorded; but to remove all doubt of the fact, good Catholics tell you, that the marks of the feet of our Saviour are still to be seen on a stone at the church. It seems wonderful, that an immaterial spirit should leave a sentient impression on matter, but I was assured this made the miracle so much the greater.

At the church of *Domine quo Vadis*, the road separates; the Via Ardentina turns to the right, but we continued our way to the left, along the Via Appia, and stopped to see some sepulchral chambers at the huge red wooden gate of a vineyard, called the *Vigna di Giuseppe Vaniolini*. Long and loudly did our attendants knock and bawl, before either *Giuseppe* or any of his family condescended to answer. Through the manifold chinks of the gate, indeed, an old woman was observed from time to time to protrude her withered face and snaky locks; but it was not till after the perseverance of near half an hour in this exercise, that a man surlily came forth; and after reconnoitring us through the aforesaid convenient chinks, at length undrew the bolts and admitted us. Little now is to be seen of the three sepulchral chambers. Though they were only discovered in the course of the last century, they seem to have been destroyed with considerable care and activity. They have been converted into pig-sties, broken up into charcoal holes, and finally carried off for the sake of the bricks. Vestiges of each of the three, however, remain; and some of the *Columbiæ*, the little vases of Terra Cotta, are still filled with the ashes of the dead. They obtained their name from their supposed resemblance to pigeon-holes, though to me they seem much more like garden-pots, and are made of much the same coarse red earthen-ware. I remember seeing specimens of these *columbiæ*, or *ollæ*, in the British Museum. They were only used for dependants or slaves. According to the inscriptions found here, (which are now in the Capitol Museum,) this Columbarium contained the remains of six thousand of the freedmen of Augustus. Nearer to the Porta San Sebastiano, another Columbarium was found filled with the urns of the freedmen of

Livia, but it is totally destroyed. The entrance to these sepulchral chambers was generally at the top, to which the funeral train, bearing lights, ascended by an external stair, and descended by an internal one; a mode calculated to give great effect to the procession.

The custom of carrying torches at funerals (from which they derived their name—*a funalibus*) is of very remote antiquity.* The Catholics derived it from the Romans, the Romans from the Greeks, and the Greeks from the Egyptians; for the burning of lights before the dead was considered by the ancients as essential to the repose or safe passage of the departing spirit; a superstition still entertained by the vulgar in our own, and perhaps in almost every other country.

From the ruins of this Columbarium, we proceeded along the Appian Way to the Tomb of Cecilia Metella, which is generally acknowledged to be the most beautiful sepulchral monument in the world. It consists of a round tower formed of immense blocks of Tiburtine stone, fixed together without cement, and adorned with a Doric marble frieze, on which are sculptured rams' heads festooned with garlands of flowers. That they are rams' heads, must be evident to any one who will take the trouble to examine them, but they are usually denominated the heads of oxen, because the tomb itself is vulgarly called *Capo di Bove*. But this name is obviously derived from an ox's head, (the arms of the Gaetani family, by whom it was converted into a fortress,) which was affixed many centuries ago on the side of the tower next the Appian Way,† and still remains there; and accordingly the vulgar name is Capo di Bove, "the head of the ox," in the singular—not in the plural.

This beautiful tower rests upon a square basement which has been despoiled of its exterior coating, by Popes and other purloiners, but the greatest part of it is buried beneath the soil. The wall of the tower itself, the interior of which is entirely built of brick, is twenty

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* Æn. xi. 144. Persius, Sat. iii. 103.
† Nardini, lib. iii. cap. 3.

feet at least in thickness; and its solidity and circular form have resisted the attacks of barbarian violence. The sepulchral vault was below the present level of the earth, and it was not till the time of Paul III. that it was opened, when the beautiful marble sarcophagus of Cecilia Metella, now in the Palazzo Farnese, was found in it. A golden urn, containing the ashes, is said to have been discovered at the same time; but if so, it has long since disappeared. That Cecilia Metella, for whose dust this magnificent monument was raised, was the daughter of Metellus, and the wife of Crassus, is all we know. All that the devouring tomb has not swallowed up, is an empty name—the mockery of immortality on earth. It gives the shadow, but withholds the substance.

Her husband, who was the richest, and the meanest of the Romans, had himself no grave. He perished miserably with a Roman army in the deserts of the East, in that unsuccessful expedition against the Parthians, which has stamped his memory with incapacity and shame.

The rude battlements on the top of the tower, and all the old walls and fortifications which surround it, are the work of the Gaetani family, who long maintained their feudal warfare here. Their ruined church is exactly similar to the country churches of England at this day, and very unlike any that are to be seen in Italy. The remains of their castle will not stand a comparison with those of our feudal barons.

We pursued our way along the deserted and grass-grown line of the Appian Way, to the spot where Canova has recently re-erected the broken fragments of the marble tomb of the Servilian family. Among the immense number of mouldering sepulchres which arrested our gaze as we passed along, all, excepting the few whose names I have now noticed, are unknown.

It is impossible to contemplate unmoved these forgotten tombs of magnificence. They speak to the heart of man that awful lesson, "From dust ye came, and to dust ye shall return."

——— "That heap
Of mouldering urns (their ashes blown away,
Dust of the mighty!) the same story tell;
And at its base, from whence the serpent glides
Down the green desert street, yon hoary monk
Laments the same, the vision as he views—
The solitary, silent, solemn scene,
Where Cæsars, heroes, peasants, hermits, lie
Blended in dust together; where the slave
Rests from his labours; where the insulting proud
Resigns his power, the miser drops his hoard;
—Where human folly sleeps." *

At some little distance to the westward, on the waste of the Campagna, are some scattered ruins and walls of a singular construction, which are said to enclose the *Campus Ustrinus*, the place where the bodies of the Plebeian dead were burnt. Those of the Patrician order were burnt in the Campus Martius.

We were obliged, by an engagement, to return to Rome as fast as possible, without being able to visit the Catacombs; so that I must defer giving you an account of them to a future day; a misfortune, I conceive, you will endure with laudable patience. Adieu.

LETTER XXXVII.

TOMBS—PYRAMID OF CAIUS CESTIUS—PROTESTANT BURYING GROUND—MAUSOLEUM OF AUGUSTUS—NERO'S GRAVE—TORRE DI QUINTO—SIEGE AND SITUATION OF VEII—TOMB OF OVID.

Near the Porta San Paola stands the gray pyramid of Caius Cestius. Who or what he was is unknown. The monument that commemorates his death, alone tells us that he lived. From it we learn, that he was the contemporary of Cæsar and Augustus, but his name does not appear in the annals or the literature of that eventful and

* Dyer's Ruins of Rome.

enlightened period. The last struggles of expiring freedom do not seem to have roused him to take a part to save or to destroy. Of his wealth, and of his pride, this magnificent tomb is a sufficient record; but of his merits, or his virtues, no trace remains. The inscription only tells us he was one of the seven *Epulones*, whose office was, to furnish, and to eat, the sacred banquets offered to Jupiter and the gods.*

This pyramid, of more than a hundred feet in height, is entirely built of marble, but time has changed its colour, and defaced its polish. The gray lichen has crept over it, and wild evergreens hang from its crevices. But what it has lost in splendour it has gained in picturesque beauty; and there are few remains of antiquity within the bounds of the Eternal City, that the eye rests upon with such unwearying admiration, as this gray pyramid.

It stands in the "Prati del Popolo Romano," and though no longer devoted to the enjoyment of the living, but to the repose of the dead; bright and beautiful in the first days of the year was the verdure that covered "the meadows of the Roman people."

They are now the burial-place of Protestants, and consequently of foreigners only; for all Italians must be Catholics. By far the greater part of the strangers interred here are English. Their marble tomb-stones were scattered over the green turf, and the words of my native tongue engraven on these mute memorials, which recorded that youth, beauty, rank, and talents, had here met a premature grave, spoke powerfully home to the heart in this foreign land. Those who now lay unconscious here, had perhaps, like me, visited this spot in the fulness of youth and hope, as little thinking that their grave should be added to those they sorrowed over.

In one place the earth was newly turned up. It was the grave of one, who, in the flower of youth, and the

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* The feasts set before the statues of the gods at the solemn *Lectisternium*, (for some account of which, see Letter XXVI.) were eaten by the Epulones alone; but those annually served up to them in the Capitol, were publicly eaten by all the Senators.

pride of fortune, had fallen a victim to disease, in the very scene whither pleasure had led him ; and the new-laid stone which recorded his early virtues, spoke the grief of the friends and companions who had raised this mournful tribute to his memory.

The stillness and seclusion of the spot, the soft verdure of the earth the ethereal brightness of the heavens, the graves of yesterday at our feet, and the proud tomb of the Roman that died eighteen centuries ago, backed by the dark battlements of the old walls of the city,—all were in harmony with the deep repose of the scene, and the heart felt its melancholy beauty.

We entered the sepulchre of Caius Cestius, and dimly saw, by the light of torches, some faded specimens of ancient painting which had once been beautiful, and we could still trace the perfection of their design, in all its Grecian taste and correctness.

At the base of the pyramid stand two marble columns, which were found beneath the ground, and re-erected by some of the Popes. One foot, which is all that remains of the colossal statue in bronze of Caius Cestius, that formerly stood before his tomb, is now in the Museum of the Capitol.

The Mausoleum of Augustus was erected on the banks of the Tiber, in the Campus Martius, shaded with a grove of poplars, and adorned with two Egyptian Obelisks. Until the extension of the walls by the Emperor Aurelian, it was without the gate of the city. So great was the solidity of this mighty fabric, that it has been triumphant over the attacks of Time, Goths, and Popes: and its vast circumference is still entire, though the upper part is a restoration of modern days The ancient reticulated walls, in union with these clumsy new ones, may be seen in the court of the Palazzo Valdombrini, in the Ripetta;* but so closely is it hemmed in with mean modern buildings, that this small segment of their immense circle is almost the only view that is now to be obtained of the exterior.

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* The common pavement of the gateway here, and in many parts of Rome, is of broken pieces of serpentine and ancient marble ; but, till the dirt is washed off, no eye can discover it.

The interior was for a long time a garden, but late *improvements* have converted it into an arena for bull-baiting; and the rows of seats raised around it, something in the style of an ancient amphitheatre, are crowded in the evenings of summer with the modern Romans, who, in their taste for blood at least, seem to resemble their ancient predecessors.

It is certainly better to sacrifice bulls than men to the ferocious passions of the multitude; but I fear human nature is much the same now as in former ages, and that those who to-day flock to feast their eyes with the dying agonies of a noble quadruped, would have seen, with the same savage exultation, men tear each other to pieces, or fall in combats with wild beasts.

That delight so general among mankind in war and battles, with all their sanguinary horrors, may, I fear, be referred to much the same feelings; yet, bad and bloody as we still are, we cannot think without horror, that those Romans, whose very names we still venerate, instituted schools and colleges to train men to murder each other, and to die themselves for the diversion of their fellow-citizens.*

But in the vices of these proud Masters of the World, I am forgetting their tombs.

Three ranges of vaults anciently ran round the walls of the capacious Mausoleum of Augustus, which was destined for his whole race, and that of his kinsmen and descendants to the remotest degree; in short, as we should say in Scotland, for his whole clan.

We entered all that now remain of these imperial chambers of the dead. They are subdivided into small sepulchral cells communicating with each other. In one, said to have contained the ashes of Augustus, was a heap of charcoal. It was dust, equally worthy dust with that of the cold calculating selfish tyrant, whose whole life was one continued masquerade of virtue. In another

* There was a College of Gladiators on the Cœlian Hill, another on the Esquiline, another at the little town four miles from Rome, on the Via Libicana, (the ruins of which are now called the *Cento Celle*,) as appears from two inscriptions of the time of Commodus found there, and preserved in the Villa Albani.

division, where we were told the remains of the virtuous Agrippina had reposed, we found a cart. Her husband Germanicus, Octavia, Marcellus, Drusus, Agrippa, Caius and Lucius, Livia, Tiberius, are Caligula, are said to have been buried here,—the best and greatest, the vilest and most infamous, the murderers, and the murdered, confounded in one common grave.

What became of the Sarcophagus of Augustus, and of all those which filled this imperial Mausoleum, is unknown.

We left the still more magnificent Mausoleum of Hadrian,—its sepulchral character having completely merged in that of the Castle St. Angelo,—for a future visit.

Pursuing our tour of the Tombs, we left Rome by the Porta del Popolo. It was exactly at this gate, on the ground now occupied by the Church of Santa Maria del Popolo, that Nero is said to have been buried. A tree sprouted forth from his grave, in which divers demons, and other evil-disposed spirits, were known to reside, and used to sally forth at nights, working mischief.

But Pope Paschal II. routed this convocation, for he cut down the tree, and built up the church, and had Nero's ashes, together with all the hobgoblins, thrown into the Tiber, where they still lie. The fact, I am credibly informed, is recorded in an inscription on the pavement of the church, but I neglected to examine this edifying document.

The antiquaries of our days always insist upon knowing everything ancient better than the ancients themselves; yet, it seems strange that they should persist in placing Nero's tomb at the bottom of the Pincian Hill, when his own biographer asserts it was at the top. "His ashes," says Suetonius, "were deposited in the monument of the Domitian family, which stands on the top of the hill overlooking the gardens, and may be seen from the Campus Martius;" a sufficient proof it was not in the Campus Martius, and at the bottom of the hill where this church stands.* He adds, what seems a strange proof of

* Suetonius, Nero, 50.

tenderness of feeling towards the memory of such a monster,—"There were some who for a long time decked his tomb with spring and summer flowers."

The sepulchre upon the Via Cassia, vulgarly called the tomb of Nero, but really that of C. Vibius Marians, which we saw on our way to Rome, we had by accident visited several times during our residence here, so that we did not return to it now; and as there is no other tomb worth notice upon that road, we left it after crossing the Ponte Molle, and took the road to the right, which is the ancient Flaminian way,—and a deplorably bad one it is. However, we had the satisfaction of reflecting, as we classically jumbled along, that we were now traversing for the first time,—and, as some of us hoped, for the last,—a road made by the defeated Flaminius during the Punic War, and by which the victorious Cæsar advanced, after crossing the Rubicon, to subjugate his country.

On the left of the road, we passed one of those old towers, so many of which are scattered over the Campagna, vestiges of the dark ages of civil warfare.

Our coachman, who is an exceedingly communicative, as well as erudite personage, informed us it was called *Torre di Quinto*, and that "*un' certo Quinto*, who was *un' vecchio assai renomato*, lived at it in *tempi antichi*." These *tempi antichi* being, as we well know, very indefinite in their application, we asked how long is was since this hero flourished. "*Chi sa?*" says the old man, with a true Italian shrug; "*forse tre, quattro, cinque secoli passati; poco piu, poco meno, ch' importa?*"*

On referring to some of our cumbrous books of antiquities, we found, to our infinite amusement, that this old *Quinto* (who lived either three or four hundred years ago) was no less a person than Quintus Cincinnatus—from whom the wild imaginations of some antiquaries, it seems, have derived the name of this Gothic tower—though, according to others, it was only the fifth mile stone.†

* Who knows? It may be perhaps a matter of three or four hundred years ago; a little more or less. What can that signify?

† The situation of Cincinnatus's house and farm has been a fruitful

We crossed two little bridges, under the last of which flow the Valca—believed to be the ancient Cremera—the scene of that disastrous battle between the people of Veii and the *Fabii*, in which that gallant band, after having voluntarily been so long the sole and successful defenders of their country in the Veian war, betrayed, by their too ardent valour, into the snares of the enemy—fell to the last man, disdaining to survive their defeat. These patriotic Romans remind me, in the union of so many of the same name and family under one chief, as well as in their heroic bravery, of some of our Highland clans. I know you will be amused at my nationality, when you find that I cannot praise the Fabii without bringing in the Scotch.

Much dispute has arisen in modern times, respecting the site of the ancient city of Veii—the early rival of Rome—the Latin Troy, that was taken after a ten years' siege—the most important conquest of the infant republic—and which, even after its conquest, had so nearly made the Romans Veientes, and Rome cease to be.*

By the usual happy sagacity of antiquaries—who never, by any chance, stumble upon the truth—its true situation, or something very near it, which had been conjectured, was pronounced to be false, and Veii was fixed to be at Cività Castellana, about thirty-six miles from Rome, where modern inscriptions were set up, roundly asserting the fact. Not long after this, Veii was removed a few miles beyond Baccano, and about twenty from Rome—in consequence of a learned antiquary discovering the very mine by which Camillus entered the besieged city, and the pits through which the soldiers came up into the citadel; all of which I had the edification of seeing in engravings.† There was no withstanding this discovery of

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subject of discussion among the antiquaries. Pliny says it was "in Agro Vaticano;" but some of these ingenious gentlemen extend the bounds of the Vatican Ager as far as Veii. Others, who are hostile to his having lived at the above-named Gothic Tower, fix him in the fields between the Ripetta and St. Peter's, of which, by the way, the above-named Palazzo Valdombrini commands an enchanting prospect.

* I need not remind the reader, that it was the influence of Camillus alone that prevented his countrymen from abandoning the ruins of Rome, after it was burned by the Gauls, and establishing themselves at the conquered Veii, which was a larger and better built city.

† Vide Zanchi's Veio Illustrato, with plates of the Cuniculus made by Camillus, &c.

a mine, made twenty-two hundred years ago, backed by a long and learned treatise; and, accordingly, Veii was unanimously settled here, when, sixteen years ago, the accidental discovery of ancient inscriptions, sculpture, and, in short, the buried ruins of Veii itself, on the desert Campagna, about three miles east of La Storta, and thirteen north-east of Rome, proved Veii to have been exactly where they had decided it was not.

We had once intended to have paid a visit to the spot, but desisted from our purpose, on finding that the few excavations which the indolence of the proprietor had suffered to be made, are now filled up, and the antiquities that had been found in them, conveyed to Rome.*

From these marbles it appears, that if Veii was destroyed, it was also rebuilt by the Romans; for it was a flourishing city in the time of Tiberius, and probably at a much later period, as a statue of that emperor, and many inscriptions sufficiently prove.

But all this has nothing to do with the object of our present excursion, which was not to visit the site of Veii, but "the Tomb of Ovid." We knew, indeed, that the remains of the poet were interred in no classic ground—that he died in exile, the mysterious cause of which was never explained, at Tomus,† a city of Pontus, where he was buried, and that, consequently, this could not have been his tomb. But there is a charm in a name, even when we know it is unreal; and, though fancy alone has invested this ruined sepulchre with the title of the Tomb of Ovid, we entered it with feelings of interest, unavowed, perhaps, even to ourselves, but which we certainly should not otherwise have experienced.

It is, however, a tomb that the poet might have chosen. It is overhung with rocks, from which ancient trees protrude their picturesque horizontal branches, and shade the entrance, while they seem to mourn over the abandoned grave. The interior is still adorned with some nearly obliterated vestiges of ancient painting. One

* They may be seen in the Palazzo Giorgio, Via Babuina.
† Its name is now, I believe, Kioria, in Bulgaria, on the Ister.

small medallion, representing a man holding a horse, is preserved in the Casino, or gallery of the deserted Villa Altieri, within the walls of Rome; but I cannot learn what have become of all the other paintings which, at the time of the discovery of this sepulchre,* ornamented its walls and roofs. They were engraved by Bartoli, and explained by Bellori, but I have never been able even to procure a sight of the plates.

The Villa of Ovid must have been near this spot, for it was between the Claudian and Flaminian ways.† The Villa and gardens of Livia, and, subsequently, of Lucius Verus, were also near here, but no remains of them are now to be seen.‡ About a mile beyond "the Tomb of Ovid," and six miles from Rome, is the *Saxa Rubra*, so often mentioned by Tacitus,§—the same where Cicero, in one of his Philippics, accuses Mark Antony of having spent a day in drunkenness at a little obscure public house. It now bears the nearly equivalent name of the *Grotta Rossa;* but as we understood there was nothing whatever to be seen at it, and were nearly jolted to death, we returned home.

On whichever side you leave Rome, the feeling of desertion strikes you with strange and fearful surprise. From a great metropolis—the seat of the most refined arts, you plunge at once into a desert. You know yourself to be close to a large and populous city, yet you see no houses, no people, no cultivation, no signs of life; you meet no passengers on the road, or, if you catch the glimpse of a human being, he wears the garb and aspect

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* It was not till long after I visited this sepulchre, that I learnt an inscription had been found here, which proves it to be the Tomb of Q. Nasonius Ambrosius, one of the Ovidian family.

† De Ponto, lib. i. Ep. viii. v. 44.

‡ On the site of these gardens, a great many busts of Lucius Verus, and one of his colleague, Marcus Aurelius, were found abont fourteen years ago; and also a very pretty little Marine Venus, which may be seen gratis, and purchased for five hundred guineas, at the studio of a sculptor, Via della Fontanella, leading from the Corso to the Babuino. The busts of Lucius Verus are more numerous than those of any other emperor; indeed, they bear testimony to the truth of his historical character, and inform us how well he loved to multiply his own dear image! You may read his history in his face.

§ Hist. lib. iii. cap. 79, &c. &c.

of a savage. He is clad in shaggy sheep-skins, his legs and feet are bare, and his dark eyes glare wildly on you as he crosses the waste. The incongruity of your own figures and equipage, in a scene like this, sometimes startles you; you feel as if left alone in the world. At the Ponte Molle we saw before us the Porta del Popolo, and left the desert.

I lately learned from Cardinal ——, that in a vineyard near this bridge, called, I think, the Vigna Pino, he had seen, many years ago, some fine specimens of ancient painting, on the walls of a subterranean sepulchral chamber. Into this vineyard, however, we never could get access; and I have not been able to ascertain whether they are still visible, or whether, as usual, they have been carried away or destroyed. Not far from the Ponte Molle is a spring of mineral water, strongly impregnated with carbonic acid gas, called *Aqua Acetosa*, to which, in extremity of Jacobitism, our old friend, Mr. ——, would needs make a pilgrimage, because he had heard it had been drank of by the Pretender.

LETTER XXXVIII.

TOMBS—MAUSOLEUM OF SANTA CONSTANTIA, OR PRETENDED TEMPLE OF BACCHUS—MAUSOLEUM OF SANTA HELENA, OR TORRE PIGNATTARRA—THE CATACOMBS AT THE CHURCH OF SAN SEBASTIANO—THE SOULS IN PURGATORY.

From the tombs of the Augustan age, it is a long transition to those of Constantine. From the days of the first, we pass to those of the last Emperor whose reign Rome was destined to behold; yet, of all who lived and died during that long interval, no stone now tells where the remains even of one single individual repose. The magnificent mole of Hadrian, which might seem to form a so-

litary exception, retains not a trace of its original sepulchral destination. Nor is there one of the thousand mouldering tombs which are scattered over the Campagna, that can boast even a name.

About two miles from Rome, beyond the Porta Pia, on the Via Nomentana, is the Mausoleum of Santa Constantia, the daughter of Constantine the Great, which was converted into a church in honour of that saint, in early times. It is a circular building, sufficiently ugly on the outside, but the inside derives some beauty from a double range of granite columns, coupled, not in front, but in file; one close behind another. Instead of the entablature, however, small arches rest on the columns—a barbarous combination, decisive of the total decline of the art, and never seen in any building previous to the reign of Constantine. The bases and capitals of the columns, too, are all unequal, and do not correspond with each other. That it is the Mausoleum of Santa Constantia, is not denied. The inscriptions and the sarcophagus found here, the dedication of the church to her memory, and the testimony of history, prove it beyond the possibility of doubt. But it is pretended that it was previously the Temple of Bacchus, and afterwards converted into her tomb, although it is particularly recorded that Constantine built her tomb from the foundation stone; (*primum lapidem*)* and it is christened the temple of Bacchus, in spite of all intrinsic and extrinsic evidence, upon the sole strength of a coarse mosaic which ornaments the roof of the interior arcade, representing little Loves dancing upon grapes, and all the process of the vintage. But precisely the same devices are sculptured upon the porphyry sarcophagus of Saint Constantia. If, therefore, the one be a proof that the building was the Temple, the other must be a proof that the sarcophagus was the Tomb of Bacchus. Some wits may choose to imagine that the reign of this favourite deity being over, he was buried with divine honours; and really such devices would seem more appropriate for the monument of a Pagan god than a Christian saint. They

* Ammian. Marcell. Hist.

are said to allude to the vintage of heaven; and though I don't know what that means, it is certain that these, and many other Bacchanalian symbols, were common on Christian tombs at a much later period than the age of Constantine. They were found in the catacombs, and I have seen them myself on the tomb of a cardinal, in the Church of St. Clement's, and on a bishop's at St. Lorenzo's. It is probable that they were preserved rather from habit than from reasoning. Christianity was new, and its sepulchral ornaments, as yet, uninvented; those of Paganism were familiar; they would mechanically recur to the head and hand of the sculptor, nor offend the mind that was accustomed to behold, and unused to reflect upon them. We all know how much easier it is to change great things than small—forms of government rather than modes of dress—and religions than ceremonies. Whatever was the cause, however, the miserable sculpture of the low ages, which continued to multiply the ancient classical ornaments of Pagan tombs, even in the fifth and sixth centuries, permits us not to doubt of the fact; and since the sole claim of this building to the title of Temple of Bacchus, rests upon this wretched mosaic of the vintage—since the same devices are sculptured on the indisputable Sarcophagus of St. Constantia, which was found in it—since both works are in the miserable style of that age—since we have no reason to believe there ever was a temple of Bacchus within many miles of this spot—and, since this edifice has no appearance of ever having been a temple at all; I think we may safely conclude, that it had nothing to do with Bacchus, and that it is nothing more than the Mausoleum of St. Constantia, which unquestionably stood here;* and whose bones, together with those of her sister Helen, and other contemporary saints, still repose beneath the high altar. The Sarcophagus is now in the Sala della Croce Greca, in the Vatican. Some old Pope had fixed upon it for his own remains, but luckily died before he had taken measures to secure it, and his successors interred him in an humbler coffin.

* Constantiæ corpus delatum ad urbem, et in suburbanâ Via Nomentanâ post primum lapidem sepulchro, &c. Vide Ammian. Marcell.

The neighbouring Church of Santa Agnese, the adjoining Hippodrome of Constantine, and all the other objects of curiosity here, I shall defer mentioning till a future period; at present, I must carry you from the tomb of the daughter, to that of the mother of Constantine the Great,—although it is not in the least worth a visit, and is at least two miles from Rome, beyond the Porta Maggiore, on the Via Labicana, the present road to Palestrina. In our excursion to it, we overshot the mark, and came in view of some ruins, widely extended over the waste of the Campagna, at some distance from the road, on the right. They are commonly called the *Cento Cella*, and sometimes, like those on the Via Latina, *Roma Vecchia*. They are supposed to be the remains of *Sub Augusta*, a little Roman town, founded in the time of Constantine the Great.* They are, perhaps, more interesting in a poetic, or sentimental, than in an antiquarian light, for they consist of little more than broken walls, and unintelligible vestiges of Roman buildings; but they formed no inharmonious feature of the prospect before us, when, on descending a long hill, we unexpectedly beheld a most striking combination of ruins, standing upon the wild plain of the Campagna. An ancient tower, which had once been a place of defence and war, and now served as a sheep-fold, reared its ruggid walls in the fore-ground. At its base, dressed in the same covering as his flock—a rough sheep skin—a shepherd with his dog and staff lying by his side, was dozing on the grass, his head resting on the ruins, beneath which he had sheltered himself from the bleak wind. Through a broken arch the light shone full on the woody hills of Frascati, and the Alban Mount. Before us, the majestic ruins of an ancient Aqueduct,† in some parts two ranges of arches in height, crossed the green valley on the left of the road—a truly Roman remain of antiquity—marked not only with gran-

* From inscriptions found here, however, it is ascertained that there was a college of Gladiators, called the Sylvian Aurelian Gladiators, in the time of Commodus. But the ruins now remaining are generally supposed to be of later date.

† Believed to be the remains of an Aqueduct built by Alexander Severus.

deur of effect, but grandeur of purpose, and impossible, even in ruin, to be beheld without admiration. Far above them, as if to contrast the noblest works of man with the unapproachable grandeur of those of nature, towered the long line of the ruggid Apennines, partially covered with snow, which, broken into masses, returned the rich yellow hues of the sinking sun.

Late as it was, we stopped to examine the *Tor' di Schiava*, the remains of an ancient building, christened the Temple of Hope.* merely because there was such a temple somewhere on this road, where people sacrificed before they went to the Temple of Fortune, at Præneste, to consult the *Sortes*.

In returning, we found out the old wooden gate that leads to the ruined Tomb of the Empress Helena. By some antiquaries, this sepulchre of our good countrywoman† is supposed to occupy the site of the Temple of *Quietes*—not that they know anything about the matter, or have any reason for the supposition; and it is rather more certain that it is now called the Torre Pignattarra, and that it has been built with a great profusion of brick, and paucity of taste. A part only of its immense ruined circle now remains, but we have little to regret in its demolition. It contains a small neglected church, and the habitation of the priest who performs the duties.

The immense magnificent porphyry Sarcophagus of the Empress, which was found here, is now placed in the Vatican, along with that of Santa Constantia, which it precisely resembles in the form and style of sculpture.

We entered the Catacombs from this church, and walked through these narrow sepulchral pathways, until they were blocked up. They branch out in various directions, uncounted miles under ground, and formerly extended to those beneath the Church of S. Lorenzo, on one side of Rome, and S. Sebastiano on the other; but the communications have been stopped. At S. Sebastiano's alone, though a few miles only are now left open,

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* Ficoroni invented this name.

† I believe it is the venerable Bede who asserts that she was born at Winchester.

it is said they have been explored to the extent of above fifteen miles. Their ramifications, far and wide, may in fact be called endless; and their statement, even at the lowest computation, would seem fabulous. There can be little doubt that these bewildering subterranean labyrinths were the work of a long succession of ages, gradually formed by the excavation of puzzolana, an immense quantity of which was used and exported for sand, mortar, and other purposes. by the Romans.* It is probable, too, that they served as quarries of tufo stone.

The doctrine advanced by the priesthood, that they were made by the Christians for places of concealment unknown to the Pagans, is so monstrous, as scarcely to require refutation. Their amazing extent is, of itself, a sufficient proof of its falsehood; for, even supposing it practicable to have carried on such immense works, and conveyed away the mountains of sand and earth excavated, in secret, would not the very fear of discovery have prevented their unnecessary extension? Was it not defeating their very end to make them on every side of Rome, and so large, that they must inevitably have been found out? But not the unremitting labour of all the Christians that ever drew breath before the time of Constantine, could have formed the almost immeasurable extent of the Catacombs. Still, though it was neither in the power or the policy of the Christians to have made such enormous works, it is highly probable, that, when made, they were used by them for places of concealment for the living, and of burial for the dead.

They were, however, likewise used for the burial of Pagans, long before there were any Christians. They are mentioned by Horace, by Varro,† and, I am told, by Festus and Pompeius, under the name of *Puticuli*, in which infants—whose bodies were never burnt‡—were interred; and also such adults of the lower orders as were

* It is thought that the ancient Roman mortar owed its peculiar hardness to the qualities of the puzzolana, which still forms the best cement in the world.

† Hor. lib. i. sat. 8. l. 8. Varro, lib. iv. v.

‡ Pliny, lib. vii. cap. 54. Juvenal, sat. 15. Cic. De Leg. lib. vii. cap. 16.

too poor to afford the expenses of funeral piles. The bodies of those who were struck dead by lightning were never burnt. They were either buried, or left on the ground where they fell.*

We had long meditated a descent into the Catacombs, and at last contrived to put it into execution.

Imagine us, then, assembled in the Church of St. Sebastian, on the point of penetrating into these long and almost interminable cemeteries, summoning up all our courage to encounter their mysterious terrors, and prepared for every possible combination of gloom and horror amidst the chilling damps of these ancient receptacles of the dead. We descended a dark narrow staircase, each bearing a lighted taper; and at the bottom entered upon the sepulchral labyrinth, the low and crumbling roof above our heads almost threatening to crush us, and the rock on either side filled with cavities for corpses.

The way was so narrow as only to admit a single person, so that we proceeded one after another in a long line, the echo of our footsteps sounding heavily on the ear, and the lights borne by each, the dark military cloaks in which the gentlemen had wrapped themselves, the white waving garments of the ladies, and the long sable robes of the attendant servants of the church, forming altogether such a striking procession through these subterraneous sepulchres, that I could not help observing we wanted nothing but the figure of Death at our head, to be taken for a company of ghosts.

The cavities for the dead are hollowed out horizontally in the soft puzzolana rock, three or four tiers, one above another. To my great surprise, every one of them was empty; not a bone was anywhere to be seen; they had all been carried off, we were told, as precious relics. But almost all the cavities seemed to be for children; few, certainly, were large enough to contain a man of ordinary size; so that, if really all filled with Christian martyrs, as the clergy say, they must for the most part have been babes, and a very small proportion could have arrived at

* Cic. De Leg. lib. ii. cap. 54.

years of discretion. The extraordinary predominance of these cavities, the ordinary size of an infant's grave, is of itself a sufficient corroboration of the fact already alluded to, that the catacombs were used for places of burial for Pagan children; and if you consult a few moderate-sized folios, out of the many that have been written on the catacombs, you will find that tombs of heathens of all sizes have been taken out of them.*

But be they heathen or heretic, it makes no difference,—all go for saints that are found here, and not a bone of one of them is now to be seen through the whole extent of the catacombs. Having once been declared to be the precious relics of the martyrs, they have been collected, laid up for use, and exported all over the Christian world. A cardinal has the management of this lucrative traffic; and it is certainly a comfortable thing to know, that while the virtue of these bones fortifies the souls of the faithful abroad, the sale of them fills the pockets of the priesthood at home. There are sage people who think, that, like the widow's cruise of oil, the store will prove inexhaustible, always answering to the demand.

At the bottom of the staircase, before we reascended to upper day, we entered a square chapel, hollowed out of the rock, where the early Christians, who were concealed in these labyrinths, we were told, offered up their orisons. The altar is decorated by a highly extolled bust of St. Sebastian by Bernini, characterized, I thought, by a full share of his usual affectation, exaggeration, and absence of truth and nature. Service is still performed here once a-year for the souls of the blessed martyrs.

We met with none of the horrors which the relation of others had led us to anticipate, nor even the cold and damp, which we had dreaded the most of all.

The catacombs of Rome are, however, far inferior in grandeur to those of Naples, whose spacious galleries and lofty halls, tier above tier, buried in the earth, and tenanted by the dead, powerfully affect the imagination.

In the hands of a poet, or a man of genius, what potent

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* Roma Sacra, Martinelli, &c. &c.

engines they might prove of horror and sublimity! What scenes of deep awakening interest, terror, and pity, might be conjured up within these mysterious chambers! But our greatest living poet has been there, and *Childe Harold* may possibly bury himself within them, to scoff in bitterness at the frailties and sorrows of mortality, or people the unexplored labyrinths of death with those mysterious images of despair and guilt that obey the spell of his dark and powerful genius.*

The Church of S. Sebastian is one of the seven basilica of Rome that pilgrims visit to obtain "absolution and remission of their sins." But here were we, a parcel of poor heretics, who had visited these holy shrines in vain, —for our sins, unabsolved, still stuck by us. Before we left the Church, one of its retainers begged of us—"for the holy souls in purgatory," upon which your friend —— insisted upon knowing what good money could do them there. The man reluctantly replied, that the money was given to say masses for them, and that these masses shortened the period of their purgation.

"What rascals these priests must be, if they know their masses will release the poor souls that are broiling in the flames, and yet they won't say them without being paid for it! Is that what they call Christian charity, I wonder?"

The man pitching on his last word, only replied by recommencing his accustomed whine of "Carità, Signorè! per le Anime Sante in Purgatorio! Carità," &c. &c.

Mr. ——— then showing him a piastre,† asked, with great apparent seriousness and simplicity, how many souls *that* would take out of purgatory. The man, evidently half enraged, but unwilling to lose the money, declared he could not safely take upon him to say how many souls it would deliver from the flames, but he could aver that it would do much towards furthering the liberation of some of them.

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* Written during Lord Byron's short visit to Rome, and before the Fourth Canto of Childe Harold was composed.

† A crown-piece.

Mr. ——— then began to bargain with him for the number of masses that were to be said for it; and having cheapened them from one, which he at first proposed, to four, he gave him the piece of money for the "Anime Sante," and went away.

Such a conversation, in such a place, a century or two ago, I imagine, might have got our friend into a hotter situation in this world, than the "Anime Sante" occupy in the other.

LETTER XXXIX.

UNDESCRIBED REMAINS OF ANTIQUITY IN THE VICINITY OF ROME, ON THE VIA APPIA—FOUNTAIN OF THE NYMPH EGERIA—ANCIENT TEMPLE, OR CHURCH OF ST. URBAN—TEMPLE OF VIRTUE AND HONOUR—TEMPLE OF REDICULUS—RUINS OF A ROMAN VILLA.

The principal antiquities of Rome we have now described at perhaps too great length; but it is difficult to turn our eyes from the fallen relics of ages of glory, and monuments of grandeur, such as the earth can witness no more. In the wilderness that surrounds Rome, there are still some scattered remains that we must yet visit; and, among these, none is more interesting than the Fountain of the nymph Egeria. It is more than a mile out of Rome, along the Via Appia, and you may easily include it in your visit to the Circus of Caracalla, and the Tomb of Cecilia Metella. A little beyond the Porta San Sebastiana, you cross the Almone, (Almo,) a small stream which gushes out from the left side of the road, and is now generally known by the name of the Marana. It is composed of the waters of the Fountain of Egeria, as well as of the reputed Crabra which is celebrated in Cicero's Letters. Its course, as Ovid remarks, is singularly short,

being after a few miles lost in the Tiber.* In ancient times, the Almo was renowned for its medicinal and purifying properties. The cattle were brought to its banks to be healed of their diseases: and, apparently, its virtues applied not only to brutes, but to deities; for it was the custom of the priests of Cybele, every year, on a certain day in spring, to bring the sacred image of that goddess, which was no other than a piece of black basalt, from her temple on the Palatine, and wash it in this water; and it is a curious proof of the introduction of Pagan usages into Christianity, that, till within these few years back, an image of our Saviour was annually brought from the Church of Santa Martina, in the Forum, and washed in this stream.

The image of Cybele, was the famous *Simulacrum*—that sacred stone which fell from heaven upon Phrygia—and was sent for in solemn deputation by the Romans during the second Punic War, when the prophecy of the Sibylline books declared, that "the foreign invaders of Italy should be driven out of it, if Cybele, the mother of the gods, was brought from Pessinus, in Phrygia, to Rome."† So, as Esculapius appeared in the shape of a serpent, Cybele arrived in that of a stone. A Scipio, (the cousin of Africanus,) "the most virtuous man in Rome," was chosen to receive her; and it was on this occasion that the Vestal Claudia miraculously vindicated her aspersed honour, by towing the vessel fraught with the precious burden, (immovable to others,) by her girdle, up the Tiber, to Rome.‡

A short drive, along a very narrow lane, and bad road, conducted us to a little green valley, covered with a carpet of soft turf, and shaded by a few scattered old trees. The grotto of Egeria is hollowed out in the steep side of the bank, in a long and deep recess, or gallery, with a vaulted roof, and niches at the sides for statues. At the top reclines a mutilated marble statue, not of the nymph,

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* Cursuque brevissimus Almo. † Vide Livy, lib. xxviii. cap. 46.

‡ An ancient bass relief in the Vatican Library, and another in the Capitol, represent this famous Pagan miracle.

but of a water god, from which flows the most delicious water I ever tasted. The sides of the grotto are overhung with the beautiful Capillaire plant, that loves to grow on rocks that drink the water drop. This spot, though much more beautiful in painting than in reality, is, however, highly interesting, and it is now abandoned to a solitude as profound as when Numa first sought its enchanted glade.

That it is really the haunt of the fabled, or mortal nymph, whom he loved to visit, and whose counsels, in those sacred shades, poured wisdom on his soul—who is there that would not wish to believe? But this gratification is denied us, merely, it seems, because some careless expressions in Juvenal and Ovid have induced some antiquaries to conclude, that the Fountain of Egeria must have been on the other side of the Via Appia—though I am sure no valley nor fountain can there be found, that the most antiquarian imagination can assign for the abode of the nymph. But these learned men are certainly not of the description of those that

> ——— "give to empty nothing
> A local habitation and a name."

Their labour is to destroy them; and they have effectually taken from this spot every charm of remembrance, by pronouncing it to be the *Nymphæum* of some Roman villa. A Nymphæum was a luxury known only in such climates as these. It was a place of retirement, and coolness, and delight, in the heats of summer. It was a vaulted grotto, generally sunk in a hill-side, open only at the mouth, like a cave, and filled with fountains, and fresh flowing waters, and embellished with statues of Nymphs and Naiades. It must be owned that this answers to the description, and accords exactly, though on a smaller scale, with the remains of the *Nymphæum* of Domitian, at the Lake Albano.

On the hill above is a temple, metamorphosed into a church, and dedicated to Saint Urban the Eighth. It is built of brick, with a portico of four noble Corinthian columns of white marble, more than half enveloped in the modern

and ruinous wall built across the intercolumniations which form the front of the church.

From the grove which surrounds it, and from its situation above the fountain, it was once supposed to be the Temple of the Muses; but a votive altar, which was unluckily dug up in the area before the temple, with a mystic serpent twined round it, and the name of a priest of Bacchus inscribed upon it, has given rise to the belief that it was the Temple of Bacchus. Be this as it may, the shrine of the deified Pope seems as deserted now as that of the Pagan god—whoever he might be. The fane is shut up, and abandoned to ruin. A countryman opened the door for us, and we examined this said altar, which is standing in what was the ancient portico of the temple. All the learned of the party were unanimously convinced that the altar was an altar, and the temple a Temple of Bacchus. Some stupid old antiquarian once pretended this was the Temple of Virtue and Honour, which was built by Marcellus, near the ancient Porta Capena; therefore its site must be within the present extended circle of the walls, and not a mile and a half beyond it. Besides, this is a single temple—that was a double one; so contrived—extremely unlike the way to honours in real life—that there was no way to the Temple of Honour but through that of Virtue.*

The windows of this temple are pronounced to be modern. The building is supposed, by Piranesi, to be of republican origin, but restored in the age of the Antonines. The fact is, they know nothing about it.

We vainly tried to decipher an obliterated inscription—fancied we could trace the pattern of the stucco ornaments that had once adorned the roof—made an unsuccessful attempt to penetrate to the Crypt beneath, and bought an antique marble vase for tenpence.†

We descended the hill again to the Fountain of the Nymph, and returned down a little green valley, where we stopped to examine a little brick building, gayly decorated with Corinthian pilasters, of red and yellow brick,

* Plutarch's Life of Marcellus. † Two Pauls.

known by the name of the Temple of the God Rediculus.

That a temple was raised to the God Rediculus, on account of that deity's merit in having procured Hannibal's retreat without besieging Rome, on the very spot where he persuaded him to turn back;* and that this temple was beyond the Porta Capena, two miles on the Appian Way,† we have high authority to prove. But, unluckily, the same authority proves that the said temple was on the right side of the road, and this little building is on the left—*ergo*, this is not the Temple of Rediculus.

If it had, it certainly would have been a poor return for so great a favour. The Romans never had a better friend than Rediculus, when he persuaded Hannibal, on account of a shower of hail,‡ to retreat from Rome. It is well known, however, that the Carthaginian was struck with despair by the intelligence that an army had marched out of one gate for Spain, while he was lying before another. I rather wonder, that he, who was such an adept at stratagem himself, never suspected that this might be done purposely to deceive him; and, above all, that he swallowed so easily the story told him by a prisoner, of the ground on which he was encamped being sold on that very day in Rome, at its full value. He certainly took rather a childish and impotent method of revenge, by proclaiming in his camp an auction of the banker's shops in the Roman Forum, and then marching back into Campania, from whence, it would seem, he had come purely to do this feat.

Hannibal's encampment, as, I believe, I mentioned before, was on the Anio. The temple that commemorated his retreat was on the Via Appia,§ a considerable distance from it. He must therefore have marched with his army there, when the storm overtook him which drove him to his intrenchments, declaring "that he was

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* Festus v. Rediculi fanum extra portam Capenam fuit quia accidens ad urbem Hannibal ex eo loco redivit quibusdam perterritus visis.

† Pliny, lib. x. cap. 43.

‡ Livy, lib. xxvi. cap. 10, 11.

§ Festus v. Rediculi. Pliny, lib. x. cap. 43.

sometimes deprived of the will, and sometimes of the power to take Rome."

As for this little building, which is on the wrong side of the road, and notwithstanding bears the name of the Temple of Rediculus—the antiquaries will not allow it to be a Temple at all, because it had windows, and had not a portico ; but they say it might have been an *Ædicola*, because the rules with respect to building temples did not apply to these small places of worship ; and that, in short, it must have been an Ædicola, because it could have been nothing else—but what Ædicola, they cannot say. The windows disqualify it for a tomb, or else it would have been accounted one.

Be it what it may, it is really a curiosity of its kind. It is so tiny, so gay, so fragile-looking, and so like a toy, that we can scarcely believe that it has stood seventeen or eighteen centuries ; yet the beauty of the brick-work proves its high antiquity. It can scarcely be of later date than the reigns of the first Cæsars—certainly not than the age of the Antonines.

Instead of returning immediately to Rome, we turned off opposite the little Church of *Domine quo Vadis*, and crossed the Campagna to the westward, in search of a spot where some mosaic pavements were discovered about a fortnight ago.

A shepherd accidentally paring off a turf, beheld beneath it a piece of mosaic. This gave rise to farther examination, and seven mosaic pavements were brought to light, which had lain unsuspected, within a few inches of the surface, for a long succession of ages.

What treasures may yet be buried beneath the wide unbroken turf of the Campagna, and may be destined to lie unseen for ages to come!

These rooms have evidently belonged to a Roman villa —some magnificent villa of the *Interamna*.* They are very small—about the size of those at Pompeii. Ulysses bound to the mast, and the Sirens, half-birds half-women, singing to allure him to their toils, are represented in one

* Cic. Orat. pro T. Ann. Milo.

of them. Another is considerably deeper than the rest; and on the walls of the room to which it belongs, which are still standing, some female figures are painted, with the hateful names of Pasiphaë, Leucothea, Scylla, and Canace, inscribed beneath them; but the colouring is faded, and the outline only indistinctly visible.

Broken fragments of statues and vases, ancient marbles, tubes of terra cotta, belonging to the hot baths, and a thousand nondescript vestiges of a once magnificent habitation, newly dug up, were scattered about. It was strange to see these pictured mosaic pavements framed in the green sod, and these shattered remains of beauty and luxury lying in this desolate waste.

LETTER XL.

REMAINS OF ANTIQUITY ON THE VIA LATINA—TEMPLE OF FORTUNA MULIEBRIS—RUINS OF ROMA VECCHIA.

We left Rome by the Porta San Giovanni, to visit the Temple of *Fortuna Muliebris*, which was erected on the Via Latina, (the modern road to Frascati,) in commemoration of the eventful day when the prayers and tears of a wife and mother averted the vowed vengeance of Coriolanus, and saved Rome. For this, the "Fortune of Woman" was ever afterwards worshipped among the Romans; and a medal, bearing on its reverse the Ædicola of *Fortuna Muliebris*, proves that it was rebuilt by Faustina the Younger, the wife of Marcus Aurelius. The present road is a little to the right of the Via Latina, the ancient line of which may be traced on the left by a row of ruined tombs, crossing the green Campagna. One of these is in high preservation, and beautifully built of deep red-coloured bricks, ornamented with brick pilasters, and capitals supporting a rich cornice. It stands upon a basement

paved with mosaic. The entrance, though fronting the present road, was behind the ancient road, which was invariably the case with sepulchres. Higher up the same hill, and nearly at the top, stands a similar edifice, built of brick, and adorned with brick pilasters, supposed to be the Ædicola of Fortuna Muliebris. It has several small windows in the upper apartment, and the entrance fronts exactly towards Rome. It has been ascertained, by measurement, to be four miles from the ancient Porta Latina, on the Cœlian Hill ; and though Livy* says that Coriolanus's camp was five miles from Rome, he probably computed it from the *Miliarum Aureum*, the gilt column erected by Augustus in the Forum, on which all the distances of the great roads were marked, which must be a mile from the ancient gate.†

For once, therefore, we may be permitted to indulge the hope, that we stand on the very spot where Veturia and Volumnia, at the head of the Roman matrons, implored the pity of the incensed conqueror,—where love for his family triumphed over hatred to his country, and the sacred voice of nature subdued the dictates of revenge.

This little temple is precisely of the same construction, style, and taste, even to the very colour of the bricks, as the tomb I have mentioned farther down the hill, nearer Rome, from which it differs only in having windows ; and it resembles, in every respect, the little building we visited yesterday, called the Temple of Rediculus. Apparently, they are all works of the same age, which, if we allow this to be the Ædicola of Fortuna Muliebris, must be that of Marcus Aurelius, although, judging from their appearance only, I should have referred them to an earlier period of the Empire.

This little temple commands a most striking view of the broken arches of the Claudian and Martian Aqueducts, stretching over the deserted plain.

The *Fossa Cluilia*, so noted in Roman annals,‡ is sup-

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* Livy, lib. ii. cap. 39, 40.

† The miles were, however, always reckoned from the gates of the city. Dio, lib. viii.

‡ Livy, lib. i. cap. 23. lib. ii. cap. 39.

posed to be near this building, and the plain a little to the right is pointed out as the very spot where, according to tradition, the battle between the Horatii and Curiatii was fought.

In the same direction are the ruins of *Roma Vecchia ;* for such is the name given to the remains of a small Roman town evidently not of very high antiquity, the ancient name of which is unknown.* It is generally believed that a villa of the Emperor Gallienus stood here, and that a part at least of these ruins belonged to it.

We crossed the Frascati road, and a little rivulet which runs by the side of it, and walked about a quarter of a mile over the Campagna, to visit these vestiges of ancient habitations left in the desert. They consist of a considerable extent of ruined and roofless, but still lofty, brick buildings, one of which has three large windows in front, and, in the inside, three niches for statues. It may have been the basilica of this little town. In another place, we observed two ranges of covered arches supporting a vaulted and stuccoed roof, which may have been a Piscina, or reservoir of water. Another ruin has evidently been converted into a fortification during the times of feudal warfare ; and the mean clumsy building of barbarous days is erected upon the mason-work of the Roman walls.

The most common plan of Roman towns, was two principal streets, forming an equal cross with the Forum at the intersecting point. But no such plan can be traced here, no remains of temples or theatres can be seen ; nothing can be distinctly understood amidst these confused remains ; and the mind turns away from their contemplation at last, perplexed and dissatisfied, unable to clear up the obscurity which time has thrown over them.

But though the name of this ruined Roman town, and the period of its destruction, are undetermined, one impression forces itself on the mind in surveying its remains —that its ruin has not been the result of slow decay, or

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* But not unconjectural. It has been called Pagus Lemonius, but we can have no certainty.

gradual destruction, but sudden and total,—the work of a day of blood and violence. These walls seem to bear record of the time when a legion of remorseless barbarians filled these grass-grown streets, sacked the empty halls and silent dwellings, and put their defenceless inhabitants to the sword. This may be fancy, but in these ruined habitations, and in the mystery which involves their history and their fate, there is something which does not address itself in vain either to the heart or the imagination.

LETTER XLI.

ST. JOHN LATERAN.

Deep is the fall from Imperial to Papal Rome. We descend through long ages of still increasing barbarism, till we reach the lowest abyss of degradation and misery. From the noonday of Roman glory, of arts and literature, we fall into the darkness of ignorance—the midnight of taste. From the antiquities of Roman days, we must now reluctantly turn to the vestiges of those times which have been justly and emphatically styled *the dark ages;* for the light of learning, and science, and civilization, was then totally obscured. Reason and refinement were fled—brutal force, lawless tyranny, and slavish superstition, reigned over the world; and what memorials can ages such as these have left, that we should love to look upon?

Alike uninteresting in themselves, and in all the recollections they awaken, I am sure I shall anticipate your wishes by hastening over these monuments of meanness and degradation as rapidly as possible.

"Non ragioniam di lor, ma guarda e passa."

They chiefly consist of Basilicas, but their number is appalling. The ancient churches receive this name from

being generally formed out of Roman Basilicæ, or Halls of Justice, and from being always built nearly on the same plan. The Tribune, at the upper part of the building,—the seat of the judge,—received the altar; and throughout Italy to this day, it retains the name of Tribune,—and indeed the form.

Many of the old churches of Rome are still called Basilica; but that title properly belongs to the Basilica par excellence,—the Seven Basilica,—which possess the invaluable privilege of according six thousand years' indulgence to the penitent who shall visit in one day their designated shrines and altars.

These are St. Peter's, St. John Lateran's, Santa Maria Maggiore's, S. Paolo *fouri le murà*, Santa Croce in Gierusalemme, S. Sebastiano, and S. Lorenzo *fouri le murà*.

Constantine was the grand builder of these holy erections. At the prayer of the female saints of his family, he founded Basilica upon Basilica; and, careless of the fate of the city he had resolved to desert, and the splendour of which he longed to eclipse, he permitted the pious zeal of the Christians to pull down the superb temples, and tear away the noble columns and portioos, that had sheltered the false Gods of Paganism. There is not an ancient church of the Papal city which is not adorned with the spoils of Imperial Rome.

It is now fifteen hundred years since Constantine founded the Basilica of St. John Lateran, which, during many succeeding ages, maintained its rank as the mother of churches, and the head of the Christian world, until it was displaced by its ambitious rival, St. Peter's.

It seems to have derived the name of Lateran from a Pagan source, even from Plautius Lateranus, the leader of the first and unsuccessful conspiracy against Nero,* whose magnificent house† was confiscated with the rest of his property. "This house," says Nardini, "Constantine gave Pope St. Sylvester for his palace." That may be; but I must here observe, by the way, that it is

*. Tacitus, Ann. 15.

† Juvenal calls it "Egregias Lateranorum." Sat. 10. l. 17.

common to call many of these worthies Popes, now they are defunct, who never were saluted with the title, or even heard of it, while alive; and certainly Popes were unknown until many centuries after good St. Sylvester had flourished.*

Constantine, however, as they say, gave to him and to his successors, the Bishops of Rome, the house of the Roman Patriot for their Episcopal palace; but it does not appear, as has sometimes been asserted, that it had ever been his own residence. Marcus Aurelius, indeed, was certainly brought up in a house (the *Domus Viri*) near this, and he always preserved a strong affection for the home of his boyish days.

His equestrian statue in bronze, now at the Capitol, was found at this spot, and by some is supposed to have originally adorned it, though, according to others, it was only removed there in modern times by the Tribune Rienza, at whose coronation unfailing streams of wine flowed from the brazen nostrils of the noble horse. Such was the admiration of the Romans even in barbarous times for this unrivalled equestrian statue, that when it was removed to the Capitol, a public officer was appointed for its preservation, called *Custode del Cavallo*, with a salary; and the employment was held so honourable that it was filled by the first noble Roman families.†

Contiguous to the Palace, Constantine built the Basilica; but all his erections have long since disappeared. It has been burnt down, and built up, and enlarged, and improved, and new-fronted, so many different ways, and at so many different times, and embellished by so many different Popes, that, take it as a whole, it is one of the largest and ugliest churches you can see anywhere. Its

* In the modern acceptation of the word they were unknown. The Italian name for the Pope (*Papa*) merely means father; and I need scarcely observe, that the title is to this day common to all the Priests of the Greek Church. In ancient times, the Bishops of Rome had no distinguishing appellation, and were looked up to by the rest, not as a matter of right, but from voluntary respect.

† Winkelman also says, that the Senator was bound to present a garland of flowers every year to the Chapter of St. John's, &c. in acknowledgment of their right to this statue, but I cannot learn that this was ever the case.

southern elevation is, however, imposing, notwithstanding its load of ornaments, and its glaring defects. As a proof of the taste which has beautified its interior, I need only mention, that Borromini, the last architect who improved it, built up the ancient columns of oriental granite that supported the great nave, in his huge whitewashed buttresses. I could not but mourn, as I contemplated them, over the loss of the imprisoned granite columns within, and the waste of marble in the uncouth colossal statues of the apostles without,—one of which, like a watchmen in his box, is placed in every buttress.

The high altar carries above it a huge tower, intended, I was assured, for ornament—than which nothing can be more frightful. In a semicircular sort of gallery which runs behind the upper end of the church, there is, at one end, an altar decorated with four ancient columns of gilt bronze, said to be the identical columns made by Augustus from the *rostra* of the ships taken in the battle of Actium, and dedicated by Domitian on the Capitol. So, at least, Marliano asserts, without assigning any proof. However, the fact seems assumed by various contemporary writers, as if of acknowledged truth ; and, probably, they knew them at least to have been brought from the Capitol. At all events, they are unquestionably ancient columns, and, I believe, the only ancient columns of bronze in the world. At the other extremity of this gallery, on each side of the organ, are two magnificent ancient columns of *giallo antico*, one of which was taken from the Arch of Constantine by Clement XII., who replaced it with one of white marble.

The Corsini chapel in this church, in the unrivalled beauty and splendour of the ancient marbles which line its walls, the columns which sustain its rich frieze of sculptured bronze, the gilding which emblazons its dome, the polished marbles of its variegated pavement, the precious stones which gem its altars, and the prodigality of magnificence that enshrines the tombs of its Popes—far surpasses all that a transalpine fancy could conceive. It is built in the form of the Greek cross ; but the eye is withdrawn from its perhaps too unobtrusive architecture by the splendour of its decoration, which is, however, remarkably chaste.

The beautiful porphyry Sarcophagus, in one of the tombs which now contains the remains of Clement XII., is called the urn of Marcus Agrippa, because found in the portico of the Pantheon, although this very circumstance affords a strong presumption that it was not his; because, in the first place, Pagan temples were not used for places of interment;* and, in the second, there can be no doubt that Agrippa was buried in the magnificent mausoleum of his father-in-law.†

The cover of this superb urn is of modern workmanship, and it has been disputed among the learned whether the urn itself was anciently a Sarcophagus, or a vase used in the baths of Agrippa.‡

Just as we were leaving the Church of St. John Lateran, I observed some banners hanging up, something like those suspended in Westminster Abbey at the installation of the Knights of the Baths; but on inquiry, I found these belonged to a batch of saints that the present Pope had canonized here a few years ago, all at once. Common Princes make Dukes or Lords—mere earthly nobility; but the Pope makes the nobility of heaven. Instead of Knights, he dubs a few Saints.

In the portico of this church stands a wretched statue of Constantine, found in his baths, which may be taken as a fair specimen of the art during his reign, as we may suppose the greatest skill would be exerted on the statue of the Emperor, and it exhibits an unquestionable proof of its total degeneracy.

A still more hideous statue of Henry IV. of France graces one of the many fronts of this church, and con-

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* All the statutes and customs of the Romans prove that the rights of sepulture were considered a profanation of the Temples of the Gods; yet "the remains of Domitian were finally secretly interred in the Temple of the Flavian Family, and his ashes mingled with those of Julia, the daughter of Titus."—(Suet. Domit. 17.) So that it would seem that Gods, at least—for all the Emperors were Gods—might be interred in their own Temples. It is, however, possible that the text of Suetonius may have been corrupted, or that by "the Temple" he meant the monument or tomb, or mausoleum of the Domitian family. The term *Templum* was applied with great latitude, and embraced every variety of consecrated building.

† Vide Dion. Cassius, Hist. tom. i. p. 759.

‡ Wink. lib. iv. cap. 7. § 23.

veys no favourable impression of the advancement of the arts at that period.

This is one of the Basilicas which has a holy door—but it has also a Pagan gate, which is a much more interesting object to the eyes of heretics. It is supposed to have formerly been the entrance to a Roman, as now to a Christian Basilica, for it was brought from the old Church of S. Adriano in the Forum, which enjoys the reputation of being the remains of the Basilica of Paulus Æmilius. There is no doubt that the gate is ancient—and very little that it is not of that early date. It is of bronze. The stars were struck upon it by Alexander VII. The rest is antique. Some of its ornamental parts have been wantonly broken off since I have been at Rome.

I am credibly informed, that a little chapel, down the green avenue within the walls near this church, is built upon the very spot where St. John the Evangelist was boiled in a huge cauldron of oil; a process, which, as is well known, had in his case a much more beneficial effect than when tried upon old Jason; for he (St. John) lived afterwards to such an age, that it almost seemed, in good earnest, to have renewed his youth.

This church, as well as almost every other of any consideration in Rome, abounds in valuable relics. For, partly from being the scene of most of the principal martyrdoms, and partly from St. Helena's pious care in forwarding ship loads of relics from the Holy Land, no place is so well stocked with these spiritual treasures as Rome. It sometimes happened, indeed, that all the cargoes sent by the Empress did not arrive at their just place of destination; for instance—one day a horse employed in drawing a wagon-load of them, turned restive, and kicked so manfully, that its kicking was manifestly a miracle, and no doubt remained, that not the horse, but the relics, chose to proceed no farther. There they were accordingly deposited, and a church was built over them, which is called St. James at the Kicking of the Horses* to this day.

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* San Giacomo Scossa Cavalli.

Notwithstanding this wagon-load which went to St. James, however, St. John has some very rare and curious relics; and I will particularize a few of those exhibited here on Holy Thursday. First, the heads of St. Peter and St. Paul, encased in silver busts, set with jewels. 2d, a lock of the Virgin Mary's hair, and a piece of her petticoat. 3d, A robe of Jesus Christ's, sprinkled with his blood. 4th, Some drops of his blood in a phial bottle. 5th, Some of the water which flowed out of the wound on his side. 6th, Some of the sponge. 7th, The table on which our Saviour ate the last supper,—and which must, by a miracle, have held all the twelve apostles, although it seems impossible for more than two people to sit at it. 8th, A piece of the stone of the sepulchre on which the angel sat; and, lastly, the identical porphyry pillar on which the cock was perched when he crowed after Peter denied Christ. There are some towels, too, with which the angels wiped St. Lorenzo's face, when he was broiling on the gridiron.

I thought all these sufficiently marvellous; but what was my surprise to find the rods of Moses and Aaron! though, how they got here, nobody knows,—and two pieces of the wood of the real ark of the covenant!

But by far the most valuable relic brought from Palestine by that indefatigable collector, Santa Helena, is the Holy Staircase, the very same on which Christ descended from the judgment-seat of Pilate. It is certainly somewhat singular, that it should have escaped the total destruction of Jerusalem,—but here it is. It is likewise strange, that its merits should have been overlooked for so many centuries, during which it was permitted to rest in the obscurity of the old Lateran palace, and people walked up and down it with the most irreverent insensibility.

But when Sixtus V. rebuilt the palace, he brought its forgotten virtues to light, and raised for it an erection of its own, opposite the church, in which it is now placed; and these holy steps are now never ascended but on the knees, and are never descended at all; four parallel staircases are provided in the same building, which are not holy, and by which the penitents descend.

"These holy steps that pious knees have worn," till they are almost worn away, have now been cased in wood; and so great is the passage upon it, that, go when you will, except on a grand festa—a *festone*,—you cannot fail to see various sinners creeping up it on their knees; repeating on every step a Paternoster and an Ave Maria. On the Fridays during Lent crowds go up. I have myself more than once seen princes of royal blood slowly working their way up on their knees, their rosary in their hands. Indeed, it is only another modification of the game of "Patience," and serves to fill up the morning as well as playing it on the cards—the favourite occupation of certain princes in this city.

I am told the ascenders of this Holy Staircase gain three thousand years' indulgence every time of mounting; but what temptation is that, in a church where indulgences for thirty-nine thousand years may be bought on the festa of the patron saint?

At the top of the Staircase is the *Sancta Sanctorum*, a little dark-looking square hole, with an iron-grated window, in the centre of the house—but so holy, that no woman is ever admitted into it,—a Mahometan exclusion I could not much repine at, for really this "Holy of Holies" is a most uninviting place. It contains an altar, which, from its extreme holiness, I should suppose must be nearly useless; for even the Pope himself may not perform mass at it.

It has an altar-piece, a head of Christ, painted by the joint hand of St. Luke and some angels; and yet, people that have seen it, maintain it to be a most hideous piece of work. I can easily believe indeed, that even their angelic touches would fail to make poor St. Luke's performance decent, for his numerous works prove that he was no great hand at it. I think it was Carlo Maratti who used to lament that the Evangelist had not been a contemporary of his, that he might have given him a few lessons.

The manner in which this joint production of St. Luke and the Angels arrived here, is, however, even more extraordinary than the artists by whom it was executed.

In the days of that image-destroying Emperor, Leo the Isaurian, it is related, that a worthy patriarch of the church, in order to save this Angelic—and Evangelic—painting from his clutches, threw it into the sea at Constantinople, from whence it performed the voyage to Rome by itself, and landed itself in safety at the port.

On the outside of the Sancta Sanctorum is suspended a collection of votive pictures, chiefly commemorative of the hair-breadth escapes from divers perils, affected by the agency of the miraculous image within. Hearts, hands, heads, legs, and arms, without number, are to be seen in almost every church, in testimony of the miraculous cures worked by the image or shrine to which they are appended; but these are more than usually miraculous.

One picture represented a party overturned in a cart, and miraculously saved by tumbling on a dunghill,—another, a man in a pond, pulled out by a rope,—a third, a child, in danger of being bit by a great dog, saved by the interposition of a stick,—in all which cases, it was not the dunghill, the rope, or the stick, that got the merit of the deliverance, but this miraculous image made by St. Luke and the Angels, which we should never have dreamt had any hand in the business.

These votive pictures reminded me of the *tabulæ votivæ** of the ancients; indeed, in what do they differ from them? Have not the Pagan superstitions planted here, retained their nature, and only changed their name?

Near this building, which contains the Santa Scala, and the Sancta Sanctorum, stands the *Triclinium* of St. Leo III.—a pompous and absurd name, which denotes nothing more than some ugly old mosaic figures, the work of the low ages, that were taken from the dining-room of that saint in the old Lateran palace, when it was rebuilt by Sixtus V., and posted up into a great high Tribune built on purpose for them.

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* Vide Horace, lib. i. Od. v. 13.

——— Me, *tabula* sacer
Votiva paries indicat.

The Lateran Palace is now more usefully employed as an hospital, than as a third Papal residence.

The Baptistery, like all the Baptisteries of Italy, is dedicated to St. John the Baptist, and has the usual quantum of altars, images, and shrines. It has served as the model of them all, for it was the most ancient. It seems, as Forsyth observed, to have derived its own descent from the ancient bath, which the building strongly resembles in form; and, in fact, the font is a bath, being sufficiently ample for the complete submersion of adults.

The Baptistery is an isolated building of an octagonal form, perfectly plain on the outside. In the inside, eight noble columns of porphyry support a cornice, which does the double duty of serving for a base to eight little columns of white marble, that have the most paltry effect imaginable, stuck upon this half-completed order. Indeed, beautiful materials were never surely put together in such deplorable bad taste.*

This Baptistery was built by Constantine—but certainly not as is pretended, for his own baptism; for that he deferred, as we are informed by Eusebius, his biographer and panegyrist, with the intention of being baptised in the waters of the Jordan, and, in consequence, the ceremony was never performed till the day of his death, which happened at Nicomedia. This conclusive statement completely oversets the monkish legend, because there could have been no imaginable motive for the assertion of a falsehood, and because it must have been followed by instant confutation.

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* The largest and most beautiful columns of porphyry I ever beheld, are on each side of what was the original entrance to the building opposite to the present one. But they are so cruelly hidden in the wall, that, unless sought for, they will not even be seen, and the effect is wholly lost.

END OF VOL. I.